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RECENT ESSAYS

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LAHORE

UTTAR CHAND KAPUR & SONS

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INTRODUCTION.

THE specimens of modern English prose that have been selected by the publishers of this volume have, in the first place, the interest arising from variety. They range from examples of literary and historical criticism to light sketches of commonplace experiences. They include addresses to scholars and to working-men, as well as those intimate personal reflections to which the term Essay more properly belongs. In date of composition they extend from mid-Victorian times to the present day, and some of them are coloured by the fateful experiences of the Great War, some carry us back to primitive civilization, to medieval story, or to the great Elizabethan age. Some of the essays deal with the deepest problems of human conduct and belief, others enliven us with vivacious comments on ordinary affairs. Some raise questions of social and political importance that still await solution; some have actually helped in solving the problems they discuss, while others leave us to muse with the authors over the vagaries and humours of human behaviour.

It may therefore be claimed, in the second place, that this collection is of interest from the value of the matter, apart from the form, of its contents. It is not a gathering of trifles. An essential element of literature is the thought it embodies, and all the writers here included have significant things to say. It has been disputed whether the cardinal virtue of prose is Justice or Persuasion; the present selection may serve to exemplify both of these virtues. The writers do not give us impassioned or oratorical or ornate prose; what they

give us is good work-a-day prose animated by the spirit that seeks to promote just causes and persuade us to uphold them.

In the third place, this volume has an interest due to the recency and freshness of its material. The reader is spared the pain of grappling with the archaisms and recondite allusions so abundant in many selections of English prose and still employed affectedly by some of our modern essayists. The contents are written in the English of to-day several of the authors are, happily, still vigorously at work, Mrs Meynell died in 1922, and the remainder saw the last decade of the nineteenth century. For those readers who are interested in form or style, rather than in matter, the present selections give scope for the study of modern methods of composition, modern idiom, and all the other elements of modern English style. The student need not hesitate to treat them as models worthy of imitation, not in the sense of servile copying, but in the Aristotelian sense of helps towards the creative representation of true ideas.

As this book consists mainly of essays it may be useful to consider what constitutes an Essay. There has been much futile discussion of this question—futile because it has turned upon formal and pedantic definitions, and not upon the actual usage of the term. Any definition which excludes the essays of such writers as Macaulay or Froude or Huxley because they are not sufficiently autobiographical, must be far too narrow; to confine the term to essentially egotistical writing is a misuse of the word. We must go to the authors who have themselves classed their work as essays, and try to discover what they meant by the appellation.

Dr Johnson defined the essay as "a loose sally of the mind; an irregular indigested piece, not a regular

and orderly composition." This may apply loosely to the essays of Montaigne (from whom we took the name), of Bacon, and of many others, yet we must not forget that, though Bacon's essays are strings of detached reflections, his transitions from one point to another are often made with care and regularity. And obviously Johnson's definition cannot apply to such finished studies as those of Macaulay, Froude, or Matthew Arnold. In his useful treatise "The English Essay and Essayists" Dr Walker finds the essence of the essay to lie in its comparative shortness and its incompleteness—the incompleteness arising either from treating a subject only in outline, or from handling only a branch or division of some greater theme. This view seems to concern itself mainly with the matter rather than the form of the essay. For a composition, from the literary point of view, is not incomplete merely because the author has not exhausted his subject. Artistically it may be complete, a rounded and polished unit, producing a satisfying intellectual and emotional impression that leaves no sense of inadequacy or incompleteness.

We come, then, to those definitions that lay stress upon the personal element as most clearly distinguishing the essay from other literary forms. Alexander Smith, a brilliant but neglected essayist, says "It is moulded by some central mood, whimsical, serious, or satirical." The truth of this is seen easily in the case of Montaigne, who said, "It is myself I portray," and also in the case of Addison, Steele, Lamb, Hazlitt, Stevenson, Alice Meynell, Chesterton, or Lynd. But it is applicable even to the case of Froude, to whom some would deny the gifts indispensable for the personal essay. It may be true that he stands below the five great Victorian essayists—Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold and Newman. Yet

Froude's personal history and character have left a deep impression upon all his writings, and in the essay "On Progress" the personal touch, the revelation of a serious and somewhat satirical mood, is certainly not wanting. Some degree of self-revelation by the author seems to be essential to the true essay we must feel that we are "getting to know him" But to demand that this intimacy should be reduced to the level of a familiar connection, a fireside talk, is going too far, self-revelation may be indirect and implicit, yet none the less real

Walter Pater's view of the essay comes near the mark To him it was, in the words of an old dictionary definition, "a little trench or hole which they dig to search for one," it was the proper literary form of an age like ours, in which truth is realizable chiefly as the effect of a personal experience,—a kind of dialogue with oneself, a formulated and public part of that continuous company we keep with ourselves through life Here we have the twofold mark of the essay the "attempt" or search after some truth or truths that our own experience has suggested to us, and the record of our efforts in language that comes from our own inmost selves Thus we realize the falsity of any definition of the essay which declares that the literary critic, the philosopher, the historian, the theologian, the scientist, can only masquerade as essayists In reading the essays of a philosophical thinker like Dean Inge or a scientist like Professor Huxley—both fearless truth-seekers and truth-tellers—we feel that we are sharing in the self-communings of men who have reflected deeply on things that concern us, their straightforward appeal "comes home to men's business and bosoms"

The usefulness of this miscellany will be greatly impaired if it is regarded merely as a group of specimens

of English prose, each to be studied as a separate unit. Apart from the scope for comparison of one style with another, there is the opportunity to view the same subject from different angles. Thus on educational problems the opinions of Froude, Ruskin, and Huxley may be correlated and compared, even Alice Meynell and Chesterton have something to say on these topics. On the meaning, purpose, and method of History, we get pregnant thoughts from Froude, and Chesterton. On the nature and criteria of human Progress we may with advantage consider Froude. And similarly, there are points of contact on other questions of moral and social interest, all of which the intelligent student may profitably consider in the light of the conditions of his own country and his own times.

In dealing with a complex subject such procedure facilitates comprehension, and in the words of Stevenson, "all comprehension is creative." To comprehend a thing clearly and in its manifold relations is to create, and to express it in words that convey to others a sense of our sincerity and personal belief is to give it something approaching literary form. The mere imitation of an author's style is of comparatively small value, imitation of this slavish kind is fatal to the sincerity and spontaneity that are essential to originality, for, as Carlyle has well said, the merit of originality is not novelty, but sincerity. This is a point of view that teachers and students should bear in mind in estimating the value of all essays or "attempts" at original composition. The student's true task is to read the works of the best authors, to try to master their ideas and diction, and to bend these to his own sincere purposes. In the words of Sir Henry Newbolt, "The more a writer struggles to invent the less he is likely to create. His true way is a different one: he finds his material among the accumulated

stores of the race, whether ancient or modern; he sets to work to reject all that he judges unnecessary or unfit, to add all that is lacking; and finally, without effort, almost without consciousness of his power, he endows his work with his own personal quality in the act of making it serve his own purpose." The student, therefore, need not be nervously afraid that when he composes he may not be original, what he has to do is not necessarily to state new truths, but to express ideas that are freshly significant for himself.

Numerous subjects for discussion and debate are suggested by these essays, the value of the arguments, the soundness of the conclusions, the evidence of prejudice and predilection, the influences of environment and training upon the authors,—all of these give scope for dialectic, spoken and written. Fortunately, some of the essays are of a length sufficient to afford opportunity for the making of analyses or summaries that will bring to light the frame-work on which they have been built up. It is a useful exercise to discover the leading ideas and topical sentences that may serve as the key to the whole content of each essay. Some of the writers express themselves bluntly and epigrammatically, others, like Pater and Stevenson, who show much conscious and elaborate care in the choice and arrangement of words, may not be so rapidly summed up, but all of them will repay attentive scrutiny.

The appended Notes include brief Introductions to the various authors, with some reference to their other works. It may be hoped that the readers of this book will not rest content until they have made further acquaintance with this interesting and prolific group of modern writers.

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ON PROGRESS

AMONG the varied reflections which the nineteenth century is in the habit of making on its condition and its prospects, there is one common opinion in which all parties coincide—that we live in an era of progress. Earlier ages, however energetic in action, were retrospective in their sentiments. The contrast between a degenerate present and a glorious past was the theme alike of poets, moralists, and statesmen. When the troubled Israelite demanded of the angel why the old times were better than the new, the angel admitted the fact while rebuking the curiosity of the questioner. ‘Ask not the cause,’ he answered. ‘Thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.’ As the hero of Nestor’s youth flung the stone with ease which twelve of the pigmy chiefs before Troy could scarcely lift from the ground, so ‘the wisdom of our ancestors’ was the received formula for ages with the English politician. Problems were fairly deemed insoluble which had baffled his fathers, ‘who had more wit and wisdom than he.’ We now know better, or we imagine that we know better, what the past really was. We draw comparisons, but rather to encourage hope than to indulge despondency or foster a deluding reverence for exploded errors. The order of the ages is inverted. Stone and iron came first. We ourselves may possibly be in the silver stage. An age of gold, if the terms of our existence on this planet permit the contemplation of it as a possibility, lies unrealized in the future. Our lights are before us, and all behind a shadow. In every department of life—

in its business and in its pleasures, in its beliefs and in its theories, in its material developments and in its spiritual convictions—we thank God that we are not like our fathers. And while we admit their merits, making allowance for their disadvantages, we do not blind ourselves in mistaken modesty to our own immeasurable superiority.

Changes analogous to those which we contemplate with so much satisfaction have been witnessed already in the history of other nations. The Roman in the time of the Antonines might have looked back with the same feelings on the last years of the Republic. The civil wars were at an end. From the Danube to the African deserts, from the Euphrates to the Irish Sea, the swords were beaten into ploughshares. The husbandman and the artisan, the manufacturer and the merchant, pursued their trades under the shelter of the eagles, secure from arbitrary violence, and scarcely conscious of their masters' rule. Order and law reigned throughout the civilized world. Science was making rapid strides. The philosophers of Alexandria had tabulated the movements of the stars, had ascertained the periods of the planets, and were anticipating by conjecture the great discoveries of Copernicus. The mud cities of the old world were changed to marble. Greek art, Greek literature, Greek enlightenment, followed in the track of the legions. The harsher forms of slavery were modified. The bloody sacrifices of the Pagan creeds were suppressed by the law, the coarser and more sensuous superstitions were superseded by a broader philosophy. The period between the accession of Trajan and the death of Marcus Aurelius has been selected by Gibbon as the time in which the human race had enjoyed more general happiness than they had ever known before, or had known since, up to

the date when the historian was meditating on their fortunes. Yet during that very epoch, and in the midst of all that prosperity, the heart of the empire was dying out of it. The austere virtues of the ancient Romans were perishing with their faults. The principles, the habits, the convictions, which held society together were giving way, one after the other, before luxury and selfishness. The entire organization of the ancient world was on the point of collapsing into a heap of incoherent sand.

If the merit of human institutions is at all measured by their strength and stability, the increase of wealth, of production, of liberal sentiment, or even of knowledge, is not of itself a proof that we are advancing on the right road. The unanimity of the belief therefore that we are advancing at present must be taken as a proof that we discern something else than this in the changes which we are undergoing. It would be well, however, if we could define more clearly what we precisely do discern. It would at once be a relief to the weaker brethren whose minds occasionally misgive them, and it would throw out into distinctness the convictions which we have at length arrived at on the true constituents of human worth, and the objects towards which human beings ought to direct their energies. We are satisfied that we are going forward. That is to be accepted as no longer needing proof. Let us ascertain or define in what particulars and in what direction we are going forward, and we shall then understand in what improvement really consists.

The question ought not to be a difficult one, for we have abundant and varied materials. The advance is not confined to ourselves. France, we have been told any time these twenty years, has been progressing

enormously under the beneficent rule of Napoleon III. Lord Palmerston told us, as a justification of the Crimean War, that Turkey had made more progress in the two preceding generations than any country in the world. From these instances we might infer that Progress was something mystic and invisible, like the operation of the graces said to be conferred in baptism. The distinct idea which was present in Lord Palmerston's mind is difficult to discover. In the hope that some enlightened person will clear up an obscurity which exists only perhaps in our own want of perception, I proceed to mention some other instances in which, while I recognize change, I am unable to catch the point of view from which to regard it with unmixed satisfaction. Rousseau maintained that the primitive state of man was the happiest, that civilization was corruption and that human nature deteriorated with the complication of the conditions of its existence. A paradox of that kind may be defended as an entertaining speculation. I am not concerned with any such barren generalities. Accepting social organization as the school of all that is best in us, I look merely to the alterations which it is undergoing; and if in some things passing away it seems to me that we are lightly losing what we shall miss when they are gone and cannot easily replace, I shall learn gladly that I am only suffering under the proverbial infirmity of increasing years, and that, like Esdras, I perplex myself to no purpose.

Let me lightly, then, run over a list of subjects on which the believer in progress will meet me to most advantage

I

I will begin with the condition of the agricultural

poor, the relation of the labourer to the soil, and his means of subsistence

The country squire of the last century, whether he was a Squire Western or a Squire Allworthy, resided for the greater part of his life in the parish where he was born. The number of freeholders was four times what it is at present, plurality of estates was the exception, the owner of land, like the peasant, was virtually *ascriptus glebæ*—a practical reality in the middle of the property committed to him. His habits, if he was vicious, were coarse and brutal—if he was a rational being, were liberal and temperate, but in either case the luxuries of modern generations were things unknown to him. His furniture was massive and enduring. His household expenditure, abundant in quantity, provided nothing of the costly delicacies which it is now said that every one expects and every one therefore feels bound to provide. His son at Christ-church was contented with half the allowance which a youth with expectations now holds to be the least on which he can live like a gentleman. His servants were brought up in the family as apprentices, and spent their lives under the same roof. His wife and his daughters made their own dresses, darned their own stockings, and hemmed their own handkerchiefs. The milliner was an unknown entity at houses where the milliner's bill has become the unvarying and not the most agreeable element of Christmas. A silk gown lasted a lifetime, and the change in fashions was counted rather by generations than by seasons. A London house was unthought of—a family trip to the Continent as unimaginable as an outing to the moon. If the annual migration was something farther than, as in Mr Primrose's parsonage, from the blue room to the brown, it was limited to the few weeks at the country town. Enjoy-

ments were less varied and less expensive. Home was a word with a real meaning. Home occupations, home pleasures, home associations and relationships, filled up the round of existence. Nothing else was looked for, because nothing else was attainable. Among other consequences, habits were far less expensive. The squire's income was small as measured by modern ideas. If he was self-indulgent, it was in pleasures which lay at his own door, and his wealth was distributed among those who were born dependent on him. Every family on the estate was known in its particulars, and had claims for consideration which the better sort of gentlemen were willing to recognize. If the poor were neglected, their means of taking care of themselves were immeasurably greater than at present. The average squire may have been morally no better than his great-grandson. In many respects he was probably worse. He was ignorant, he drank hard, his language was not particularly refined, but his private character was comparatively unimportant, he was controlled in his dealings with his people by the traditionary English habits which had held society together for centuries—habits which, though long gradually decaying, have melted entirely away only within living memories.

At the end of the sixteenth century an Act passed obliging the landlord to attach four acres of land to every cottage on his estate. The Act itself was an indication that the tide was on the turn. The English villein, like the serf all over Europe, had originally rights in the soil, which were only gradually stolen from him. The statute of Elizabeth was a compromise reserving so much of the old privileges as appeared indispensable for a healthy life.

The four acres shrivelled like what had gone before;

but generations had to pass before they had dwindled to nothing, and the labourer was inclosed between his four walls to live upon his daily wages

Similarly, in most country parishes there were tracts of common land, where every householder could have his flock of sheep, his cow or two, his geese or his pig; and milk and bacon so produced went into the limbs of his children, and went to form the large English bone and sinew which are now becoming things of tradition. The thicket or the peat bog provided fuel. There were spots where the soil was favourable in which it was broken up for tillage, and the poor families in rotation raised a scanty crop there. It is true that the common land was wretchedly cultivated. What is every one's property is no one's property. The swamps were left undrained, the gorse was not stubbed up. The ground that was used for husbandry was racked. An inclosed common taken in hand by a man of capital produces four, five, or six times what it produced before. But the landlord who enters on possession is the only gainer by the change. The cottagers made little out of it, but they made something, and that something to them was the difference between comfort and penury. The inclosed land required some small additional labour. A family or two was added to the population on the estate, but it was a family living at the lower level to which all had been reduced. The landlord's rent-roll shows a higher figure, or it may be he has only an additional pheasant preserve. The labouring poor have lost the faggot on their hearths, the milk for their children, the slice of meat at their own dinners.

Even the appropriation of the commons has not been sufficient without closer paring. When the commons went, there was still the liberal margin of grass on either

side of the parish roads, to give pickings to the hobbled sheep or donkey. The landlord, with the right of the strong, which no custom can resist, is now moving forward his fences, taking possession of these ribands of green, and growing solid crops upon them. The land is turned to better purpose. The national wealth in some inappreciable way is supposed to have increased, but the only visible benefit is to the lord of the soil, and appears in some added splendour to the furniture of his drawing-room.

It is said that men are much richer than they were, that luxury is its natural consequence, and is directly beneficial to the community as creating fresh occupations and employing more labour. The relative produce of human industry, however, has not materially increased in proportion to the growth of population. 'If riches increase, they are increased that eat them.' If all the wealth which is now created in this country was distributed among the workers in the old ratio, the margin which could be spent upon personal self-indulgence would not be very much larger than it used to be. The economists insist that the growth of artificial wants among the few is one of the symptoms of civilization—is a means provided by nature to spread abroad the superfluities of the great. If the same labour, however, which is now expended in the decorating and furnishing a Belgravian palace was laid out upon the cottages on the estates of its owner, an equal number of workmen would find employment, an equal fraction of the landlord's income would be divided in wages. For the economist's own purpose, the luxury could be dispensed with if the landlord took a different view of the nature of his obligations. Progress and civilization conceal the existence of his obligations, and destroy at the same time

the old-fashioned customs which limited the sphere of his free-will. The great estates have swallowed the small. The fat ears of corn have eaten up the lean. The same owner holds properties in a dozen counties. He cannot reside upon them all, or make personal acquaintance with his multiplied dependants. He has several country residences. He lives in London half the year, and most of the rest upon the Continent. Inevitably he comes to regard his land as an investment, his duty to it the development of its producing powers, the receipt of his rents the essence of the connexion, and his personal interest in it the sport which it will provide for himself and his friends. Modern landlords frankly tell us that if the game laws are abolished, they will have lost the last temptation to visit their country seats. If this is their view of the matter, the sooner they sell their estates and pass them over to others, to whom life has not yet ceased to be serious, the better it will be for the community. They complain of the growth of democracy and insubordination. The fault is wholly in themselves. They have lost the respect of the people because they have ceased to deserve it.

II.

If it be deemed a paradox to maintain that the relation between the owners of land and the peasantry was more satisfactory in the old days than in the present, additional hardiness is required to assert that there has been no marked improvement in the clergy. The bishop, rector, or vicar of the Established Church in the eighteenth century is a by-word in English ecclesiastical history. The exceptional distinction of a Warburton or a Wilson, a Butler or a Berkeley, points the contrast

only more vividly with the worldliness of their brothers on the bench. The road to honours was through political subserviency. The prelates indemnified themselves for their ignominy by the abuse of their patronage, and nepotism and simony were too common to be a reproach. Such at least is the modern conception of these high dignitaries, which instances can be found to justify. In an age less inflated with self-esteem, the nobler specimens would have been taken for the rule, the meaner and baser for the exception. Enough, however, can be ascertained to justify the enemies of the Church in drawing an ugly picture of the condition of the hierarchy. Of the parochial clergy of those times the popular notion is probably derived from Fielding's novels. Parson Trulliber is a ruffian who would scarcely find admittance into a third-rate farmers' club of the present day. Parson Adams, a low-life Don Quixote, retains our esteem for his character at the expense of contempt for his understanding. The best of them appear as hangers-on of the great, admitted to a precarious equality in the house-keeper's room, their social position being something lower than that of the nursery governess in the establishment of a vulgar millionaire.

That such specimens as these were to be found in England in the last century is no less certain than that in some parts of the country the type may be found still surviving. That they were as much exceptions we take to be equally clear. Those who go for information to novels may remember that there was a Yorick as well as a Phutatorius or a Gastripheres. Then, more than now, the cadets of the great houses were promoted, as a matter of course, to the family livings, and were at least gentlemen. Sydney Smith's great prizes of the Church were as much an object of ambition to men of

birth as the high places in the other professions; and between pluralities and sinecures, cathedral prebendaries, and the fortunate possessors of two or more of the larger benefices, held their own in societies with the country families, and lived on equal terms with them. If in some places there was spiritual deadness and slovenliness, in others there was energy and seriousness. Clarissa Harlowe found daily service in the London churches as easily as she could find it now

That the average character of the country clergy, however, was signally different from what it is at present, is not to be disputed. They were Protestants to the back-bone. They knew nothing and cared nothing about the Apostolical Succession. They had no sacerdotal pretensions, they made no claims to be essentially distinguished from the laity. Their official duties sat lightly on them. They read the Sunday services, administered the Communion four times a year, preached commonplace sermons, baptized the children, married them when they grew to maturity, and buried them when they died; and for the rest they lived much as other people lived, like country gentlemen of moderate fortune, and, on the whole, setting an example of respectability. The incumbents of benefices over a great part of England were men with small landed properties of their own. They farmed their own glebes. They were magistrates, and attended quarter sessions and petty sessions, and in remote districts, where there were no resident gentry of consequence, were the most effective guardians of the public peace. They affected neither austerity nor singularity. They rode, shot, hunted, ate and drank, like other people, occasionally, when there was no one else to take the work upon them, they kept the hounds. In dress and habit they were simply a superior class of small country gentlemen;

very far from immaculate, but, taken altogether, wholesome and solid members of practical English life. It may seem like a purposed affront to their anxious and pallid successors, clad in sacerdotal uniform, absorbed in their spiritual functions, glorying in their Divine commission, passionate theologians, occupied from week's end to week's end with the souls of their flocks, to contrast them unfavourably with secular parsons who, beyond their mechanical offices, had nothing of the priest to distinguish them, yet it is no less certain that the rector of the old school stood on sounder terms with his parishioners, and had stronger influence over their conduct. He had more in common with them. He understood them better, and they understood him better. The Establishment was far more deeply rooted in the affections of the people. The measure of its strength may be found in those very abuses, so much complained of, which, nevertheless, it was able to survive. The forgotten toast of Church and King was a matter of course at every country dinner. The omission of it would have been as much a scandal as the omission of grace. Dissenters sat quiescent under disabilities which the general sentiment approved. The revival of spiritual zeal has been accompanied with a revival of instability. As the clergy have learnt to magnify their office, the laity have become indifferent or hostile.

Many causes may be suggested to explain so singular a phenomenon. It is enough to mention one. The parson of the old school, however ignorant of theology, however outwardly worldly in character, did sincerely and faithfully believe in the truth of the Christian religion; and the congregation which he addressed was troubled with as few doubts as himself. Butler and Berkeley speak alike of the spread of infidelity, but it was an infidelity

confined to the cultivated classes—to the London wits who read Bolingbroke or Hume's *Essays* or *Candide*. To the masses of the English people, to the parishioners who gathered on Sundays into the churches, whose ideals were confined to the round of their common occupations, who never left their own neighbourhood, never saw a newspaper or read a book but the Bible and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the main facts of the Gospel history were as indisputably true as the elementary laws of the universe. That Christ had risen from the dead was as sure as that the sun had risen that morning. That they would themselves rise was as certain as that they would die; and as positively would one day be called to judgment for the good or ill that they had done in life. It is vain to appeal to their habits as a proof that their faith was unreal. Every one of us who will look candidly into his own conscience can answer that objection. Every one of us, whatever our speculative opinions, knows better than he practises, and recognizes a better law than he obeys. Belief and practice tend in the long run, and in some degree, to correspond, but in detail and in particular instances they may be wide asunder as the poles. The most lawless boys at school, and the loosest young men at college, have the keenest horror of intellectual scepticism. Their passions may carry them away; but they look forward to repenting in the end. Later in life they may take refuge in infidelity if they are unable to part with their vices, but the compatibility of looseness of habit with an unshaken conviction of the general truths of religion is a feature of our nature which history and personal experience alike confirm.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the change which has passed over us all during the last forty years. The most ardent ritualist now knows at heart that the ground

is hollow under him. He wrestles with his uncertainties. He conceals his misgivings from his own eyes by the passion with which he flings himself into his work. He recoils from the blankness of the prospect which threatens to open before him. To escape the cloud which is gathering over the foundations of his faith he busies himself with artificial enthusiasm in the external expressions of it. He buries his head in his vestments. He is vehement upon doctrinal minutæ, as if only these were at stake. He clutches at the curtains of mediæval theology to hide his eyes from the lightning which is blinding him. His efforts are vain. His own convictions are undermined in spite of him. What men as able as he is to form an opinion doubt about, by the nature of the case is made doubtful. And neither in himself nor in the congregations whom he adjures so passionately is there any basis of unshaken belief remaining. He is like a man toiling with all his might to build a palace out of dry sand. Ecclesiastical revivals are going on all over the world, and all from the same cause. The Jew, the Turk, the Hindoo, the Roman Catholic, the Anglo-Catholic, the Protestant English Dissenter, are striving with all their might to blow into flame the expiring ashes of their hearth fires. They are building synagogues and mosques, building and restoring churches, writing books and tracts, persuading themselves and others with spasmodic agony that the thing they love is not dead, but sleeping. Only the Germans, only those who have played no tricks with their souls, and have carried out boldly the spirit as well as the letter of the Reformation, are meeting the future with courage and manliness, and retain their faith in the living reality while the outward forms are passing away.

III.

The Education question is part of the Church question, and we find in looking at it precisely the same phenomena. Education has two aspects. On one side it is the cultivation of man's reason, the development of his spiritual nature. It elevates him above the pressure of material interests. It makes him superior to the pleasures and the pains of a world which is but his temporary home, in filling his mind with higher subjects than the occupations of life would themselves provide him with. One man in a million of peculiar gifts may be allowed to go no farther, and may spend his time in pursuits merely intellectual. A life of speculation to the multitude, however, would be a life of idleness and uselessness. They have to maintain themselves in industrious independence in a world in which it has been said there are but three possible modes of existence, begging, stealing, and working, and education means also the equipping a man with means to earn his own living. Every nation which has come to anything considerable has grown by virtue of a vigorous and wholesome education. A nation is but the aggregate of the individuals of which it is composed. Where individuals grow up ignorant and incapable, the result is anarchy and torpor. Where there has been energy, and organised strength, there is or has been also an effective training of some kind. From a modern platform speech one would infer that before the present generation the school-master had never been thought of, and that the English of past ages had been left to wander in darkness. Were this true, they would have never risen out of chaos. The problem was understood in Old England better probably than the platform orator understands it, and received a

more practical solution than any which on our new principles has yet been arrived at. Five out of six of us have to earn our bread by manual labour, and will have to earn it so to the end of the chapter. Five out of six English children in past generations were in consequence apprenticed to some trade or calling by which that necessary feat could be surely accomplished. They learnt in their catechisms and at church that they were responsible to their Maker for the use which they made of their time. They were taught that there was an immortal part of them, the future of which depended on their conduct while they remained on earth. The first condition of a worthy life was to be able to live honestly; and in the farm or at the forge, at the cobbler's bench or in the carpenter's yard, they learnt to stand on their own feet, to do good and valuable work for which society would thank and pay them. Thenceforward they could support themselves and those belonging to them without meanness, without cringing, without demoralizing obligation to others, and had laid in rugged self-dependence the only foundation for a firm and upright character. The old English education was the apprentice system. In every parish in England the larger householders, the squire and the parson, the farmers, smiths, joiners, shoemakers, were obliged by law to divide among themselves according to their means the children of the poor who would otherwise grow up unprovided for, and clothe, feed, lodge, and teach them in return for their services till they were old enough to take care of themselves. This was the rule which was acted upon for many centuries. It broke down at last. The burden was found disagreeable, the inroad too heavy upon natural liberty. The gentlemen were the first to decline or evade their obligations. Their business was to take boys and

girls for household service. They preferred to have their servants ready made. They did not care to encumber their establishments with awkward urchins or untidy slatterns, who broke their china and whom they were unable to dismiss. The farmer and the artisans objected naturally to bearing the entire charge—they who had sufficient trouble to keep their own heads above water: they had learnt from the gentlemen that their first duties were to themselves, and their ill humour vented itself on the poor little wretches who were flung upon their unwilling hands. The children were ill-used, starved, beaten. In some instances they were killed. The benevolent instincts of the country took up their cause. The apprenticeship under its compulsory form passed away amidst universal execrations. The masters were relieved from the obligation to educate, the lads themselves from the obligation to be educated. They were left to their parents, to their own helplessness, to the chances and casualties of life, to grow up as they could, and drift untaught into whatever occupation they could find. Then first arose the cry for the schoolmaster. The English clergy deserve credit for having been the first to see the mischief that must follow, and to look for a remedy. If these forlorn waifs and strays could no longer be trained, they could not be permitted to become savages. They could learn, at least, to read and write. They could learn to keep themselves clean. They could be broken into habits of decency and obedience, and be taught something of the world into which they were to be flung out to sink or swim. Democracy gave an impulse to the movement. 'We must educate our masters,' said Mr Lowe sarcastically. Whether what is now meant by education will make their rule more

intelligent remains to be seen. Still the thing is to be done. Children whose parents cannot help them are no longer utterly without a friend. The State charges itself with their minds, if not their bodies. Henceforward they are to receive such equipment for the battle of life as the schoolmaster can provide.

It is something, but the event only can prove that it will be as useful as an apprenticeship to a trade, with the Lord's Prayer and the Commandments at its back. The conditions on which we have our being in this planet remain unchanged. Intelligent work is as much a necessity as ever, and the proportion of us who must set our hands to it is not reduced. Labour is the inevitable lot of the majority, and the best education is that which will make their labour most productive. I do not undervalue book knowledge. Under any aspect it is a considerable thing. If the books be well chosen and their contents really mastered, it may be a beautiful thing, but the stubborn fact will remain, that after the years, be they more or be they less, which have been spent at school, the pupil will be launched into life as unable as when he first entered the school door to earn a sixpence, possessing neither skill nor knowledge for which any employer in England will be willing to hire his services. An enthusiastic clergyman who had meditated long on the unfairness of confining mental culture to the classes who had already so many other advantages, gave his village boys the same education which he had received himself. He taught them languages and literature, and moral science, and art and music. He unfitted them for the state of life in which they were born. He was unable to raise them into a better. He sent one of the most promising of them with high recommendations to seek employment in a London baking-house. The lad was

asked what he could do. It was found that, allowing for his age, he could pass a fair examination in two or three plays of Shakespeare.

Talent, it is urged, real talent, crippled hitherto by want of opportunity, will be enabled to show itself. It may be so. Real talent, however, is not the thing which we need be specially anxious about. It can take care of itself. If we look down the roll of English worthies in all the great professions, in church and law, in army and navy, in literature, science, and trade, we see at once that the road must have been always open for boys of genius to rise. We have to consider the million, not the units, the average, not the exceptions.

It is argued again that by educating boys' minds, and postponing till later their special industrial training, we learn better what each is fit for, time is left for special fitnesses to show themselves. We shall make fewer mistakes, and boys will choose the line of life for which nature has qualified them. Thus may sound plausible, but capacity of a peculiarly special kind is the same as genius, and may be left to find its own place. A Canova or a Faraday makes his way through all impediments into the occupation which belongs to him. Special qualifications, unless they are of the highest order, do not exist to a degree worth considering. A boy's nature runs naturally into the channel which is dug for it. Teach him to do any one thing, and in doing so you create a capability, and you create a taste along with it; his further development will go as far and as wide as his strength of faculty can reach, and such varied knowledge as he may afterwards accumulate will grow as about a stem round the one paramount occupation which is the business of his life.

A sharp lad, with general acquirements, yet unable

to turn his hand to one thing more than another, drifts through existence like a leaf blown before the wind. Even if he retains what he has learnt, it is useless to him. The great majority so taught do not retain, and cannot retain, what they learn merely as half-understood propositions, and which they have no chance of testing by practice. Virgil and Sophocles, logic and geometry, with the ordinary university pass-man, are as much lost to him in twenty years from his degree as if he had never construed a line or worked a problem. Why should we expect better of the pupil of the middle or lower class, whose education ends with his boyhood? Why should his memory remain burdened with generalities of popular science, names and dates from history which have never been more than words to him, or the commonplaces of political economy, which, if he attaches any meaning at all to them, he regards as the millionaire's catechism, which he will believe when he is a millionaire himself? The knowledge which a man can use is the only real knowledge, the only knowledge which has life and growth in it, and converts itself into practical power. The rest hangs like dust about the brain, or dries like raindrops off the stones.

The mind expands, we are told, larger information generates larger and nobler thoughts. Is it so? We must look to the facts. General knowledge means general ignorance, and an ignorance, unfortunately, which is unconscious of itself. Quick wits are sharpened up. Young fellows so educated learn that the world is a large place, and contains many pleasant things for those who can get hold of them. Their ideas doubtless are inflated, and with them their ambitions and desires. They have gained nothing towards the wholesome gratifying of those desires, while they have gained considerable discontent

at the inequalities of what is called fortune. They are the ready-made prey of plausible palaver written or spoken, but they are without means of self-help, without seriousness, and without stability. They believe easily that the world is out of joint because they, with their little bits of talents, miss the instant recognition which they think their right. Their literature, which the precious art of reading has opened out to them, is the penny newspaper; their creed, the latest popular chimera which has taken possession of the air. They form the classes which breed like mushrooms in the modern towns, and are at once the scorn and the perplexity of the thoughtful statesman. They are Fenians in Ireland, trades-unionists in England, rabid partisans of slavery or rabid abolitionists in America, socialists and red republicans on the Continent. It is better that they should have any education than none. The evils caused by a smattering of information, sounder knowledge may eventually cure. I refuse only to admit that the transition from the old industrial education to the modern book education is, for the present or the immediate future, a sign of what can be called progress.

Let there be more religion, men say. Education will not do without religion. Along with the secular lessons we must have Bible lessons, and then all will go well. It is perfectly true that a consciousness of moral responsibility, a sense of the obligation of truth and honesty and purity, lies at the bottom of all right action—that without it knowledge is useless, that with it everything will fall into its place. But it is with religion as with all else of which I am speaking. Religion can be no more learnt out of books than seamanship, or soldiership, or engineering, or painting, or any practical trade whatsoever. The doing right alone teaches the

value or the meaning of right; the doing it willingly, if the will is happily constituted; the doing it unwillingly, or under compulsion, if persuasion fails to convince. The general lesson lies in the commandment once taught with authority by the clergyman, the application of it in the details of practical life, in the execution of the particular duty which each moment brings with it. The book lesson, be it Bible lesson, or commentary, or catechism, can at best be nothing more than the communication of historical incidents of which half of the educated world have begun to question the truth, or the dogmatic assertion of opinions over which theologians quarrel and will quarrel to the end of time. France had been held up before us for the last twenty years as the leader of civilization, and Paris as the headquarters of it. The one class in this supreme hour of trial for that distracted nation in which there is most hope of good is that into which the ideas of Paris have hitherto failed to penetrate. The French peasant sits as a child at the feet of the priesthood of an exploded idolatry. His ignorance of books is absolute, his superstitions are contemptible, but he has retained a practical remembrance that he has a Master in Heaven who will call him to account for his life. In the cultivation of his garden and vineyard, in the simple round of agricultural toil, he has been saved from the temptation of the prevailing delusions, and has led, for the most part, a thrifty, self-denying, industrious, and useful existence. Keener sarcasm it would be hard to find on the inflated enthusiasm of progress.

IV.

Admitting—and we suspect very few of our readers

will be inclined to admit—that there is any truth in these criticisms, it will still be said that our shortcomings are on the way to cure themselves. We have but recently roused ourselves from past stagnation, and that a new constitution of things cannot work at once with all-sided perfection is no more than we might expect. Shortcomings there may be, and our business is to find them out and mend them. The means are now in our hands. The people have at last political power. All interests are now represented in Parliament. All are sure of consideration. Class government is at an end. Aristocracies, land-owners, established churches, can abuse their privileges no longer. The age of monopolies is gone. England belongs to herself. We are at last free.

It would be well if there were some definition of freedom which would enable men to see clearly what they mean and do not mean by that vaguest of words. The English Liturgy says that freedom is to be found perfectly in the service of God. *'Intellectual emancipation,'* says Goethe, *'if it does not give us at the same time control over ourselves, is poisonous'*. Undoubtedly the best imaginable state of human things would be one in which everybody thought with perfect correctness and acted perfectly well of his own free-will, unconstrained, and even unguided, by external authority. But inasmuch as no such condition as this can be looked for this side of the day of judgment, the question for ever arises how far the unwise should be governed by the wise—how far society should be protected against the eccentricities of fools, and fools be protected against themselves. There is a right and wrong principle on which each man's life can be organized. There is a right or a wrong in detail at every step which he takes. Much of this he must learn for himself. He must learn to act as he learns to

walk. He obtains command of his limbs by freely using them. To hold him up each time that he totters is to deprive him of his only means of learning how not to fall. There are other things in which it is equally clear that he must not be left to himself. Not only may he not in the exercise of his liberty do what is injurious to others—he must not seriously injure himself. A stumble or a fall is a wholesome lesson to take care, but he is not left to learn by the effects that poison is poison, or getting drunk is brutalizing. He is forbidden to do what wiser men than he know to be destructive to him. If he refuses to believe them, and acts on his own judgment, he is not gaining any salutary instruction—he is simply hurting himself, and has a just ground of complaint ever after against those who ought to have restrained him. As we ‘become our own masters,’ to use the popular phrase, we are left more and more to our own guidance, but we are never so entirely masters of ourselves that we are free from restraint altogether. The entire fabric of human existence is woven of the double threads of freedom and authority, which are for ever wrestling one against the other. Their legitimate spheres slide insensibly one into the other. The limits of each vary with time, circumstances, and character, and no rigid line can be drawn which neither ought to overpass. There are occupations in which error is the only educator. There are actions which it is right to blame, but not forcibly to check or punish. There are actions again—action like suicide—which may concern no one but a man’s self, yet which nevertheless it may be right forcibly to prevent. Precise rules cannot be laid down which will meet all cases.

The private and personal habits of grown men lie for the most part outside the pale of interference. It

is otherwise, however, in the relations of man to society. There, running through every fibre of those relations, is justice and injustice—justice which means the health and life of society, injustice which is poison and death. As a member of society a man parts with his natural rights, and society in turn incurs a debt to him which it is bound to discharge. Where the debt is adequately rendered, where on both sides there is a consciousness of obligation, where rulers and ruled alike understand that more is required of them than attention to their separate interests, and where they discern with clearness in what that 'more' consists, there at once is good government, there is supremacy of law—law written in the statute book, and law written in the statute book of Heaven; and there, and only there, is freedom

Das Gesetz soll nur uns Freiheit geben

As in personal morality liberty is self-restraint, and self-indulgence is slavery, so political freedom is possible only where justice is in the seat of authority, where all orders and degrees work in harmony with the organic laws which man neither made nor can alter—where the unwise are directed by the wise, and those who are trusted with power use it for the common good

A country so governed is a free country, be the form of the constitution what it may. A country not so governed is in bondage, be its suffrage never so universal. Where justice is supreme, no subject is forbidden anything which he has a right to do or to desire, and therefore it is that political changes, revolutions, reforms, transfers of power from one order to another, from kings to aristocracies, from aristocracies to peoples, are in themselves no necessary indications of political or

moral advance. They mean merely that those in authority are no longer fit to be trusted with exclusive power. They mean that those high persons are either ignorant and so incapable, or have forgotten the public good in their own pleasures, ambitions, or superstitions, that they have ceased to be the representatives of any superior wisdom or deeper moral insight, and may therefore justly be deprived of privileges which they abuse for their own advantage and for public mischief. Healthy nations when justly governed never demand constitutional changes. Men talk of entrusting power to the people as a moral education, as enlarging their self-respect, elevating their imaginations, making them alive to their dignity as human beings. It is well, perhaps, that we should dress up in fine words a phenomenon which is less agreeable in its nakedness. But at the bottom of things the better sort are always loyal to governments which are doing their business well and impartially. They doubt the probability of being themselves likely to mend matters, and are thankful to let well alone. The growth of popular constitutions in a country originally governed by an aristocracy implies that the aristocracy is not any more a real aristocracy—that it is alive to its own interests and blind to other people's interests. It does not imply that those others are essentially wiser or better, but only that they understand where their own shoe pinches, and that if it be merely a question of interest, they have a right to be considered as well as the class above them. In one sense it may be called an advance, that in the balance of power so introduced particular forms of aggravated injustice may be rendered impossible but we are brought no nearer to the indispensable thing without which no human society can work healthily or happily—the sovereignty of wisdom over folly—the pre-

eminence of justice and right over greediness and self-seeking. The unjust authority is put away, the right authority is not installed in its place. People suppose it a great thing that every English householder should have a share in choosing his governors. Is it that the functions of government being reduced to a cypher, the choice of its administrators may be left haphazard? The crew of a man-of-war understand something of seamanship, the rank and file of a regiment are not absolutely without an inkling of the nature of military service; yet if seamen and soldiers were allowed to choose their own leaders, the fate of fleets and armies so officered would not be hard to predict. Because they are not utterly ignorant of their business and because they do not court their own destruction, the first use which the best of them would make of such a privilege would be to refuse to act upon it.

No one seriously supposes that popular suffrage gives us a wider Parliament than we used to have. Under the rotten borough system Parliament was notoriously a far better school of statesmanship than it is or ever can be where the merits of candidates have first to be recognized by constituencies. The rotten borough system fell, not because it was bad in itself, but because it was abused to maintain injustice—to enrich the aristocracy and the landowners at the expense of the people. We do not look for a higher morality in the classes whom we have admitted to power, we expect them only to be sharp enough to understand their own concerns. We insist that each interest shall be represented, and we anticipate from the equipoise the utmost attainable amount of justice. It may be called progress, but it is a public confession of despair of human nature. It is as much as to say, that although wisdom may be higher than folly

'as far as heaven is above earth, the wise man has no more principle than the fool. Give him power and he will read the moral laws of the universe into a code which will only fill his own pocket, and being no better than the fool, has no more right to be listened to. The entire Civil Service of this country has been opened amidst universal acclamations to public competition. Any one who is not superannuated, and has not incurred notorious disgrace, may present himself to the Board of Examiners, and win himself a place in a public department. Everybody knows that if the heads of the departments were honestly to look for the fittest person that they could find to fill a vacant office, they could make better selections than can be made for them under the new method. The alteration means merely that these superior persons will not or cannot use their patronage disinterestedly, and that of two bad methods of choice the choice by examination is the least mischievous.

The world calls all this progress. I call it only change, change which may bring us nearer to a better order of things, as the ploughing up and rooting the weeds out of a fallow is a step towards growing a clean crop of wheat there, but without a symptom at present showing of healthy organic growth. When a block of type from which a book has been printed is broken up into its constituent letters the letters so disintegrated are called 'pie'. The pie, a mere chaos, is afterwards sorted and distributed, preparatory to being built up into fresh combinations. A distinguished American friend describes Democracy as 'making pie'.

Meanwhile, beside the social confusion, the knowledge of outward things and the command of natural forces are progressing really with steps rapid, steady, and indeed gigantic. 'Knowledge comes' if 'wisdom

lingers' The man of science discovers; the mechanist and the engineer appropriate and utilize each invention as it is made, and thus each day tools are formed or forming, which hereafter, when under moral control, will elevate the material condition of the entire human race. The labour which a hundred years ago made a single shirt now makes a dozen or a score. Ultimately it is possible that the harder and grosser forms of work will be done entirely by machinery, and leisure be left to the human drudge which may lift him bodily into another scale of existence. For the present no such effect is visible. The mouths to be fed and the backs to be covered multiply even faster than the means of feeding and clothing them, and conspicuous as have been the fruits of machinery in the increasing luxuries of the minority, the level of comfort in the families of the labouring millions has in this country been rather declining than rising. The important results have been so far rather political and social. Watt, Stephenson, and Wheatstone, already and while their discoveries are in their infancy, have altered the relation of every country in the world with its neighbours. The ocean barriers between continents which Nature seemed to have raised for eternal separation have been converted into easily travelled highways, mountain chains are tunnelled; distance, once the most troublesome of realities, has ceased to exist. The inventions of these three men determined the fate of the revolt of the Slave States. But for them and their work the Northern armies would have crossed the Potomac in mere handfuls, exhausted with enormous marches. The iron roads lent their help. The collected strength of all New England and the West was able to fling itself into the work; Negro slavery is at an end, and the Union is not to be split like Europe.

into a number of independent states, but is to remain a single power, to exercise an influence yet unimaginable on the future fortunes of mankind. Aided by the same mechanical facilities, Germany obliterates the dividing lines of centuries. The Americans preserved the unity which they had. The Germans conquer for themselves a unity which they had not. France interferes, and half a million soldiers are collected and concentrated in a fortnight, armies, driven in like wedges, open rents and gaps from the Rhine to Orleans; and at the end of two months the nation whose military strength was supposed to be the greatest in the world was reeling paralysed under blows to which these modern contrivances had exposed her. So far we may be satisfied, but who can foresee the ultimate changes of which these are the initial symptoms? Who will be rash enough to say that they will promote necessarily the happiness of mankind? They are but weapons which may be turned to good or evil, according to the characters of those who best understand how to use them.

The same causes have created as rapidly a tendency no less momentous towards migration and interfusion, which may one day produce a revolution in the ideas of allegiance and nationality. English, French, Germans, Irish, even Chinese and Hindus, are scattering themselves over the world, some *bona fide* in search of new homes, some merely as temporary residents—but any way establishing themselves wherever a living is to be earned in every corner of the globe, careless of the flag under which they have passed. Far the largest part will never return: they will leave descendants, to whom their connection with the old country will be merely matter of history, but the ease with which we can now go from one place to the other will keep alive an intention of

returning, though it be never carried out; and as the numbers of these denizens multiply, intricate problems have already risen as to their allegiance, and will become more and more complicated. The English at Hong Kong and Shanghai have no intention of becoming Chinese, but their presence there has shaken the stability of the Chinese empire, and has cost that country, if the returns are not enormously exaggerated, in the civil wars and rebellions of which they have been the indirect occasion, a hundred million lives.

From the earliest times we trace migrations of nations or the founding of colonies by spirited adventurers, but never was the process going on at such a rate as now, and never with so little order or organized communion of purpose. No ingenuity could have devised a plan for the dispersion of the superfluous part of the European populations so effective as the natural working of personal impulse, backed by these new facilities. The question still returns, however, To what purpose? Are the effects of emigration to be only as the effects of machinery? Are a few hundred millions to be added to the population of the globe merely that they may make money and spend it? In all the great movements at present visible there is as yet no trace of the working of intellectual or moral ideas—no sign of a conviction that man has more to live for than to labour and eat the fruit of his labour.

So far, perhaps, the finest result of scientific activity lies in the personal character which devotion of a life to science seems to produce. While almost every other occupation is pursued for the money which can be made out of it, and success is measured by the money result which has been realized—while even artists and men of letters, with here and there a brilliant exception, let the

bankers' book become more and more the criterion of their being on the right road, the men of science alone seem to value knowledge for its own sake, and to be valued in return for the addition which they are able to make to it. A dozen distinguished men might be named who have shown intellect enough to qualify them for the woolsack, or an archbishop's mitre: external rewards of this kind might be thought the natural recompense for work which produces results so splendid, but they are quietly and unconsciously indifferent—they are happy in their own occupations, and ask no more, and that here, and here only, there is real and undeniable progress is a significant proof that the laws remain unchanged under which true excellence of any kind is attainable.

To conclude

The accumulation of wealth, with its daily services at the Stock Exchange and the Bourse, with international exhibitions for its religious festivals, and political economy for its gospel, is progress, if it be progress at all, towards the wrong place. Baal, the god of the merchants of Tyre, counted four hundred and fifty prophets when there was but one Elijah. Baal was a visible reality. Baal rose in his sun-chariot in the morning, scattered the evil spirits of the night, lightened the heart, quickened the seed in the soil, clothed the hill-side with waving corn, made the gardens bright with flowers, and loaded the vineyard with its purple clusters. When Baal turned away his face the earth languished, and dressed herself in her winter mourning robe. Baal was the friend who held at bay the enemies of mankind—cold, nakedness, and hunger; who was kind alike to the evil and the good, to those who worshipped him and those who forgot their benefactor. Compared to him, what was the being

that 'hid himself,' the name without a form—that was called on, but did not answer—who appeared in visions of the night, terrifying the uneasy sleeper with visions of horror, Baal was god. The other was but the creation of a frightened imagination—a phantom that had no existence outside the brains of fools and dreamers. Yet in the end Baal could not save Samaria from the Assyrians, any more than progress and 'unexampled prosperity' have rescued Paris from Von Moltke. Paris will rise from her fallen state, if rise she does, by a return to the uninviting virtues of harder and simpler times. The modern creed bids every man look first to his cash-box. Fact says that the cash-box must be the second concern—that a man's life consists not in the abundance of things that he possesses. The modern creed says, by the mouth of a President of the Board of Trade, that adulteration is the fruit of competition, and, at worst, venial delinquency. Fact says that this vile belief has gone like poison into the marrow of the nations. The modern creed looks complacently on luxury as a stimulus to trade. Fact says that luxury has disorganized society, severed the bonds of good-will which unite man to man, and class to class, and generated distrust and hatred.

A serious person, when he is informed that any particular country is making strides in civilization, will ask two questions. First personally, Are the individual citizens growing more pure in their private habits? Are they true and just in their dealings? Is their intelligence, if they are becoming intelligent, directed towards learning and doing what is right, or are they looking only for more extended pleasures, and for the means of obtaining them? Are they making progress in

what old-fashioned people used to call the fear of God, or are their personal selves and the indulgence of their own inclinations the end and aim of their existence? That is one question, and the other is its counterpart. Each nation has a certain portion of the earth's surface allotted to it from which the means of its support are being wrung are the proceeds of labour distributed justly, according to the work which each individual has done, or does one plough and another reap in virtue of superior strength, superior cleverness or cunning?

These are the criteria of progress. All else is merely misleading. In a state of nature there is no law but physical force. As society becomes organized, strength is coerced by greater strength, arbitrary violence is restrained by the policeman, and the relations between man and man, in some degree, are humanized. That is true improvement. But large thews and sinews are only the rudest of the gifts which enable one man to take advantage of his neighbour. Sharpness of wit gives no higher title to superiority than bigness of muscle and bone. The power to overreach requires restraint as much as the power to rob and kill, and the progress of civilization depends on the extent of the domain which is reclaimed under the moral law. Nations have been historically great in proportion to their success in this direction. Religion, while it is sound, creates a basis of conviction on which legislation can act; and where the legislator drops the problem, the spiritual teacher takes it up. So long as a religion is believed, and so long as it retains a practical direction, the moral idea of right can be made the principle of government. When religion degenerates into superstition or doctrinalism, the statesman loses his ground, and laws intended, as it is scornfully said, to make men virtuous by Act of Parlia-

ment, either sink into desuetude or are formally abandoned. How far modern Europe has travelled in this direction would be too large an inquiry. Thus much, however, is patent, and, so far as our own country is concerned, is proudly avowed: provinces of action once formally occupied by law have been abandoned to anarchy. Statutes which regulated wages, statutes which assessed prices, statutes which interfered with personal liberty, in the supposed interests of the commonwealth, have repealed as mischievous. It is now held that beyond the prevention of violence and the grossest forms of fraud, government can meddle only for mischief—that crime only needs repressing—and that a community prospers best where every one is left to scramble for himself, and find the place for which his gifts best qualify him. Justice, which was held formerly to be co-extensive with human conduct, is limited to the smallest corner of it. The labourer or artisan has a right only to such wages as he can extort out of the employer. The purchaser who is cheated in a shop must blame his own simplicity, and endeavour to be wiser for the future.

Habits of obedience, moral convictions inherited from earlier times, have enabled this singular theory to work for a time, men have submitted to be defrauded rather than quarrel violently with the institutions of their country. There are symptoms, however, which indicate that the period of forbearance is waning. Swindling has grown to a point among us where the political economist preaches patience unsuccessfully, and Trades-Unionism indicates that the higgling of the market is not the last word on the wages question. Government will have to take up again its abandoned functions, and will understand that the cause and meaning of its existence is the discovery and enforcement of the elementary rules of

right and wrong. Here lies the road of true progress, and nowhere else. It is no primrose path—with exhibition flourishes, elasticity of revenue, and shining lists of exports and imports. The upward climb has been ever a steep and thorny one, involving, first of all, the forgetfulness of self, the worship of which, in the creed of the economist, is the mainspring of advance. That the change will come, if not to us in England, yet to our posterity somewhere upon the planet, experience forbids us to doubt. The probable manner of it is hopelessly obscure. Men never willingly acknowledge that they have been absurdly mistaken.

An indication of what may possibly happen can be found, perhaps, in a singular phenomenon of the spiritual development of mankind which occurred in a far distant age. The fact itself is, at all events, so curious that a passing thought may be usefully bestowed upon it.

The Egyptians were the first people upon the earth who emerged into what is now called civilization. How they lived, how they were governed during the tens of hundreds of generations which intervened between their earliest and latest monuments, there is little evidence to say. At the date when they become distinctly visible they present the usual features of effete Oriental societies; the labour executed by slave gangs, and a rich luxurious minority spending their time in feasting and revelry. Wealth accumulated. Art flourished. Enormous engineering works illustrated the talent or ministered to the vanity of the priestly and military classes. The favoured of fortune basked in perpetual sunshine. The millions sweated in the heat under the lash of the task-master, and were paid with just so much of the leeks and onions and fleshpots as would continue them in a condition to work. Of these despised wretches some

hundreds of thousands were enabled by Providence to shake off the yoke, to escape over the Red Sea into the Arabian desert, and there receive from heaven a code of laws under which they were to be governed in the land where they were to be planted

What were those laws?

The Egyptians, in the midst of their corruptions had inherited the doctrine from their fathers which is considered the foundation of all religion. They believed in a life beyond the grave—in the judgment bar of Osiris, at which they were to stand on leaving their bodies, and in a future of happiness or misery as they had lived well or ill upon earth. It was not a speculation of philosophers—it was the popular creed, and it was held with exactly the same kind of belief with which it has been held by the Western nations since their conversion to Christianity

But what was the practical effect of their belief? There is no doctrine, however true, which works mechanically on the soul like a charm. The expectation of a future state may be a motive for the noblest exertion or it may be an excuse for acquiescence in evil, and serve to conceal and perpetuate the most enormous iniquities. The magnate of Thebes or Memphis, with his huge estates, his town and country palaces, his retinue of eunuchs, and his slaves whom he counted by thousands, was able to say to himself, if he thought at all, 'True enough, there are inequalities of fortune. These serfs of mine have a miserable time of it, but it is only a *time* after all, they have immortal souls, poor devils! and their wretched existence here is but a drop of water in the ocean of their being. They have as good a chance of Paradise as I have—perhaps better. Osiris will set all right hereafter; and for the present rich and poor

are an ordinance of Providence, and there is no occasion to disturb established institutions. For myself, I have drawn a prize in the lottery, and I hope I am grateful. I subscribe handsomely to the temple services. I am myself punctual in my religious duties. The priests, who are wiser than I am, pray for me, and they tell me I may set my mind at rest.

Under this theory of things the Israelites had been ground to powder. They broke away. They too were to become a nation. A revelation of the true God was bestowed on them, from which, as from a fountain, a deeper knowledge of the Divine nature was to flow out over the earth, and the central thought of it was the realization of the Divine government—not in a vague hereafter, but in the living present. The unpractical prospective justice which had become an excuse for tyranny was superseded by an immediate justice in time. They were to reap the harvest of their deeds, not in heaven but on earth. There was no life in the grave whither they were going. The future state was withdrawn from their sight till the mischief which it had wrought was forgotten. It was not denied, but it was veiled in a cloud. It was left to private opinion to hope or to fear, but it was no longer held out either as an excitement to piety or a terror to evil-doers. The God of Israel was a living God, and His power was displayed visibly and immediately in rewarding the good and punishing the wicked while they remained in the flesh.

It would be unbecoming to press the parallel, but phenomena are showing themselves which indicate that an analogous suspension of belief provoked by the same causes may possibly be awaiting ourselves. The relations between man and man are now supposed to be governed by natural laws which enact themselves independent of

considerations of justice. Political economy is erected into a science, and the shock to our moral nature is relieved by reflections that it refers only to earth, and that justice may take effect hereafter. Science, however, is an inexorable master. The evidence for a hereafter depends on considerations which science declines to entertain. To piety and conscientiousness it appears inherently probable, but to the calm, unprejudiced student of realities, piety and conscientiousness are insufficient witnesses to matters of fact. The religious passions have made too many mistakes to be accepted as of conclusive authority. Scientific habits of thought, which are more and more controlling us, demand external proofs which are difficult to find. It may be that we require once more to have the living certainties of the Divine government brought home to us more palpably, that a doctrine which has been the consolation of the heavy laden for eighteen hundred years may have generated once more a practical infidelity, and that by natural and intelligent agencies, in the furtherance of the everlasting purposes of our Father in heaven, the belief in a life beyond the grave may again be about to be withdrawn.

James Anthony Froude (1818—1894), historian and essayist, was one of the greatest writers of English prose during the nineteenth century. He was born in Devonshire, was the son of a Tory and High Churchman, and was educated at Westminster School and Oxford. In 1848 he published a volume that showed his lack of faith not only in the authority of the Church but also in some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. He gave up the idea of becoming a priest, and devoted his life to historical study. The greatest result of this labour is "The History of England from the Fall of Cardinal Wolsey to the Spanish Armada" (published 1856—1870), which occupied twenty years of research. He also published several volumes of *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (1867—1883), from which the present essay is taken, a biography of Carlyle, "The English in Ireland," and other works. He paid official visits to South Africa and Australia, and his books "Oceana" and "English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century" reveal his enthusiastic patriotism and the makers of the British Empire.

As a historian Froude is lucid, pictorial, and more accurate than was at first admitted. As an essayist he is wanting in the humour and the personal touch that mark the best essayists. His greatest merit is his prose style, a model of "that middle style which is the work-a-day instrument of every literature."

ON PROGRESS

In this essay we learn Froude's view of history. He held that history could not be an exact science, and he objected to all historical theories. He wished human history to be viewed as a great moral drama. The essay also shows traces of that bias against ecclesiasticism which developed in reaction from his early training. His guiding aim is to discover what are the true tests of Progress, as distinct from the evidences so often unthinkingly accepted by people who mistake change for improvement. He examines in turn Agriculture, the Church, Education, the Suffrage, and the Advance of Science, in every case he finds questionable

results. The one and only road to Progress is through the discovery and enforcement of the elementary rules of right and wrong. There will be hope of true progress only "when the few but all-important truths of our moral condition, which can be certainly known, have become the exclusive rule of our judgments and actions"

- 1 **troubled Israelite**—This refers to Esdras, an Israelite exile in Babylon, who questioned God's government of the world. For this he was reproved by the angel Uriel (see the books of *Esdras* in the apocryphal portion of the Old Testament)
- 1 **Nestor**—the oldest and most experienced of the Greek chieftains who went to the siege of Troy (see Homer's *Iliad*)
- 2 **the Antonines**—in Roman history the age of the Twelve Cæsars (B C 48—A D 96) was followed by that of the Antonines (A D 96—180). The latter included the reigns of Trajan (97—117) and the philosophical Marcus Aurelius (147—180)
- 2 **Copernicus**—founder of modern astronomy (1473—1543).
- 4 **Lord Palmerston**—Prime Minister of England, 1855—58 and 1859—65. As Foreign Secretary his policy was to support Turkey as a check upon Russia
- 4 **Rousseau**—his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* was published in 1753
- 4 **Esdras**—see first note above
- 5 **Squire Western**—an ignorant country gentleman in Fielding's "Tom Jones" (1749).
- 5 **Squire Allworthy**—a noble type of country gentleman in the same novel
- 5 **ascriptus gleboe**—"tied to the land"
- 5 **Mr. Primrose**—the good clergyman who is the hero of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield"
- 8 **Belgravian**—in Belgravia, a fashionable London district.
9. **fat ears**—as in Pharaoh's dream (see the Bible, *Genesis*, chap xli).
9. **Warburton, etc**—four learned Bishops of the Anglican

Church.

10. **Parson Trulliber**—a fat, ignorant clergyman in Fielding's novel "Joseph Andrews" (1742).
10. **Parson Adams**—a simple, learned, but eccentric clergyman in the same novel, rightly compared here to the hero of Cervantes' romance "Don Quixote."
10. **Yorick**—in Sterne's "Tristram Shandy" there is a lively, reckless person of this name. He is a contrast to the others—a seeker after money and a greedy sensualist.
10. **Sydney Smith**—an English wit, reformer, and divine (1771—1845), one of the founders of the "Edinburgh Review."
11. **Clarissa Harlowe**—heroine of a novel by Richardson (1749).
11. **Apostolical Succession**—the doctrine that spiritual authority is transmitted through the Bishops from the original Christian Apostles.
13. **Bolingbroke**—Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678—1751), an admirable speaker and writer, but insincere, he wrote against Christianity.
13. **Hume's 'Essays'**—written by David Hume, philosopher and historian (1711—1776), these essays lead to scepticism and unbelief.
13. **Candide**—hero and title of a satirical romance (1758) by the French author Voltaire.
17. **Mr. Lowe**—Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke (1811—1892), who was vice-president of the Education Board, he introduced a Code (1860) of elementary education to improve the instruction of the people ("our masters"). See Huxley's essay "A Liberal Education," (page 53).
19. **Canova**—Italian sculptor (1757—1822).
19. **Faraday**—chemist and natural philosopher, the son of a blacksmith, made numerous scientific discoveries of the first importance (1791—1867).
21. **Benians**—Irish revolutionaries.
25. **Das Gesetz**, etc.—a quotation from the great German author Goethe. "Only Law can give us Freedom."

which still returned members to par-
 i the constituency had disappeared—alt
 32.

es—the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71).
 of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

money-market of Paris

i of the Phoenicians whose priests were slain
 all of the prophet Elijah (see the Bible, I *Kings*).

ltke—the commander-in-chief in the Franco-Prus-
 War

the Red Sea—in allusion to the escape of the
 raelites from captivity in Egypt
 ris—the Egyptian judge of the dead

THE RELATIONS OF EDUCATION TO THE POSITION IN LIFE

JOHN RUSKIN

I AM not quite sure that you will feel the necessity of the dilemma I got into at the end of my last letter, as much as I do myself. You working men have been crowing and peacocking at such a rate lately, setting yourselves forth so confidently for the benefit of the society, and the top of the world, that perhaps you do not anticipate any of the difficulties which suggest themselves to a through-bred Tory and Conservative, like me. Perhaps you will expect a youth properly educated—a good rider—musician—and well-grounded scholar—in natural philosophy, to think it a step of promotion when he has to go and be made a tailor or a coalheaver? If you do, I should very willingly admit that you might be right, and go on to the farther development of my notions without pausing at this stumbling-block, were it not that, unluckily, all the wisest men whose sayings I ever heard or read, agree in expressing (one way or another) just such contempt, for those useful occupations, as I dread on the part of my foolishly refined scholars. Shakespeare and Chaucer,—Dante and Virgil,—Horace, and Pindar,—Homer, Æschylus, and Plato,—all the men of any age or country who seem to have had Heaven's music on their lips, agree in their scorn of mechanic life. And I imagine that the feeling of prudent Englishmen, and sensible as well as sensitive Englishwomen, on reading my last letter, would mostly be, "Is the man mad, or laughing at us, to propose educating the working

could not, if his wild scheme
 is a better method of making them

my sensible and polite friends; and
 willing as well as curious, to hear you
 of your scheme of operative education, so only
 universal, orderly, and careful. I do not say
 be prepared to advocate my athletics and
 instead. Only, observe what you admit, or
 bringing forward your possibly wiser system,
 say that a certain portion of mankind must be
 put in degrading work, and that, to fit them for
 work, it is necessary to limit their knowledge, their
 powers, and their enjoyments, from childhood
 onwards, so that they may not be able to conceive of
 a state better than the one they were born in, nor
 possess any knowledge or acquirements inconsistent with
 the coarseness, or disturbing the monotony, of their
 vulgar occupation. And by their labour in this contracted
 state of mind, we superior beings are to be maintained;
 and always to be curtsied to by the properly ignorant
 little boys, whenever we pass by.

Mind, I do not say that this is not the right state
 of things. Only, if it be, you need not be so over-
 particular about the slave trade, it seems to me. What
 is the use of arguing so pertinaciously that a black's
 skull will hold as much as a white's, when you are de-
 claring in the same breath that a white's skull must not
 hold as much as it can, or it will be the worse for him?
 It does not appear to me at all a profound state of
 slavery to be whipped into doing a piece of low work
 that I don't like, but it is a very profound state of
 slavery to be kept, myself, low in the forehead, that I
 may not dislike low work.

You see, my friend, the awkward one, whichever way you look at it is still worse, I am not puzzled only, I am puzzled by the scheme, about the boys I shall have to make of; I am just as much puzzled about what I have to make *nothing* of! Grant that, by reason or rattle, I persuade a certain number of the roughest ones into some serviceable business, coats and shoes made for the rest,—what is the state of “the rest” to be? Naturally, according to the existing state of things, one supposes they are to be some of the gentlemanly professions, to be lawyers, doctors, or clergymen. But alas, I shall not want any soldiers of special skill or pugnacity! All the boys will be soldiers. So far from wanting any law, of the kind that live by talking, I shall have the strongest possible objection to their appearance in the country. For doctors I shall always entertain a profound respect; but when I get my athletic education fairly established, of what help to them will my respect be? They will all starve! And for clergymen, it is true, I shall have a large number of episcopates—one over every hundred families—(and many positions of civil authority also, for civil officers, above them and below), but all these places will involve much hard work, and be anything but covetable, while, of clergymen’s usual work, admonition, theological demonstration, and the like, I shall want very little done indeed, and that little done for nothing! for I will allow no man to admonish anybody until he has previously earned his own dinner by more productive work than admonition.

Well, I wish, my friend, you would write me a word or two in answer to this, telling me your own ideas as to the proper issue out of these difficulties. I should

- 27 rotten borough—one
liament although I think, and what you suppose
abolished in 1832. I tell you my own notions about
30. France interfere
32. woollack—seat
32. Bourse—the
32. Baal—a god
at the c
33. Von Mo
sian
37. over
Is
37. Os

JOHN RUSKIN

1819—1900

John Ruskin, art-critic, economist, social reformer, one of the great masters of English prose was born in London of Scottish parentage, and was educated privately until he entered Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1836. Owing to ill health he left Oxford in 1840 and spent nearly two years in Italy collecting materials for the first volume of "Modern Painters," a work that revealed his unequalled command of descriptive prose. This work was not completed until 1860, after further travels on the Continent. Amongst his other books on art are "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" and "The Stones of Venice." In 1869, and again in 1883, Ruskin was appointed Professor of Art at Oxford. He was a strong supporter of the Working Men's College, and he also founded the Guild of St. George to carry out some of the principles of his life,—intelligent industry, the avoidance of machinery where hand-labour was possible, and the collection of meritorious examples of art and handicrafts. His wealth was spent on the promotion of the social welfare of the poor. His life and writings have done much to elevate the ideals of life and British standards of conduct. In continued ill health he retired to the Lake District, where he died at the close of the nineteenth century.

The present extract is from "Fors Clavigera," a series of notes and letters addressed to the public, but mainly intended for workmen. The Latin title seems to mean "Fate the Key-bearer," the fate or chance that opens and shuts the doors of opportunity. In this extraordinary collection, ranging over the years 1871 to 1884 Ruskin discusses a host of subjects, including education, railways, pictures, wealth, dress, and many other topics. He writes in the style of his later years, with simplicity and precision, his earlier style was ornate and verbose. Taking his work as a

whole, we may say that he used English with a freedom and flexibility that have never been surpassed in English literature.

THE RELATIONS OF EDUCATION TO POSITION IN LIFE

In this letter Ruskin states a dilemma or crux. To be "on the horns of a dilemma" is to be compelled to choose between two unfavourable opinions or courses of action. Ruskin would give every man a complete intellectual and physical training; those who would deny this training to men needed for inferior tasks are really advocating a system of slavery, the very thing they seek to destroy.

capped—saluted by the raising or touching of the cap.

47 **rattan**—a cane, used for corporal punishment

A LIBERAL EDUCATION; AND WHERE TO FIND IT

T. H. HUXLEY

THE business which the South London Working Men's College has undertaken is a great work, indeed, I might say, that Education, with which that college proposes to grapple, is the greatest work of all those which lie ready to a man's hand just at present

And, at length, this fact is becoming generally recognized. You cannot go anywhere without hearing a buzz of more or less confused and contradictory talk on this subject—nor can you fail to notice that, in one point at any rate, there is a very decided advance upon like discussions in former days. Nobody outside the agricultural interest now dares to say that education is a bad thing. If any representative of the once large and powerful party, which, in former days, proclaimed this opinion, still exists in a semi-fossil state, he keeps his thoughts to himself. In fact, there is a chorus of voices, almost distressing in their harmony, raised in favour of the doctrine that education is the great panacea for human troubles, and that, if the country is not shortly to go to the dogs, everybody must be educated.

The politicians tell us, "you must educate the masses because they are going to be masters." The clergy join in the cry for education, for they affirm that the people are drifting away from church and chapel into the broadest infidelity. The manufacturers and the capitalists swell the chorus lustily. They declare that ignorance makes bad workmen; that England will be soon unable to turn out cotton goods, or steam-engines, cheaper than other people; and then, Ichabod! Ichabod! the glory

will be departed from us. And a few voices are lifted up in favour of the doctrine that the masses should be educated because they are men and women with unlimited capacities of being, doing, and suffering, and that it is as true now, as ever it was, that the people perish for lack of knowledge

These members of the minority, with whom I confess I have a good deal of sympathy, are doubtful whether any of the other reasons urged in favour of the education of the people are of much value—whether, indeed, some of them are based upon either wise or noble grounds of action. They question if it be wise to tell people that you will do for them, out of fear of their power, what you have left undone, so long as your only motive was compassion for their weakness and their sorrows. And, if ignorance of everything which it is needful a ruler should know is likely to do so much harm in the governing classes of the future, why is it, they ask reasonably enough, that such ignorance in the governing classes of the past has not been viewed with equal horror?

Compare the average artisan and the average country squire, and it may be doubted if you will find a pin to choose between the two in point of ignorance, class feeling, or prejudice. It is true that the ignorance is of a different sort—that the class feeling is in favour of a different class, and that the prejudice has a distinct flavour of wrong-headedness in each case—but it is questionable if the one is either a bit better, or a bit worse, than the other. The old protectionist theory is the doctrine of trades unions as applied by the squires, and the modern trades unionism is the doctrine of the squires applied by the artisans. Why should we be worse off under one *regime* than under the other?

Again, this sceptical minority asks the clergy to think

whether it is really want of education which keeps the masses away from their ministrations—whether the most completely educated men are not as open to reproach on this score as the workmen; and whether, perchance, this may not indicate that it is not education which lies at the bottom of the matter?

Once more, these people, whom there is no pleasing, venture to doubt whether the glory, which rests upon being able to undersell all the rest of the world, is a very safe kind of glory—whether we may not purchase it too dear, especially if we allow education, which ought to be directed to the making of men, to be diverted into a process of manufacturing human tools, wonderfully adroit in the exercise of some technical industry, but good for nothing else

And, finally, these people inquire whether it is the masses alone who need a reformed and improved education. They ask whether the richest of our public schools might not well be made to supply knowledge, as well as gentlemanly habits, a strong class feeling, and eminent proficiency in cricket. They seem to think that the noble foundations of our old universities are hardly fulfilling their functions in their present posture of half-clerical seminaries, half racecourses, where men are trained to win a senior wranglership, or a double-first, as horses are trained to win a cup, with as little reference to the needs of after-life in the case of the man as in that of the racer. And, while as zealous for education as the rest, they affirm that, if the education of the richer classes were such as to fit them to be the leaders and the governors of the poorer, and, if the education of the poorer classes were such as to enable them to appreciate really wise guidance and good governance, the politicians need not fear mob-law, nor the clergy lament their want of flocks,

nor the capitalists prognosticate the annihilation of the prosperity of the country

Such is the diversity of opinion upon the why and the wherefore of education. And my hearers will be prepared to except that the practical recommendations which are put forward are not less discordant. There is a loud cry for compulsory education. We English, in spite of constant experience to the contrary, preserve a touching faith in the efficacy of acts of Parliament; and I believe we should have compulsory education in the course of next session, if there were the least probability that half a dozen leading statesmen of different parties would agree what that education should be.

Some hold that education without theology is worse than none. Others maintain, quite as strongly, that education with theology is in the same predicament. But this is certain, that those who hold the first opinion can by no means agree what theology should be taught, and that those who maintain the second are in a small minority.

At any rate "make people learn to read, write, and cipher," say a great many, and the advice is undoubtedly sensible as far as it goes. But, as has happened to me in former days, those who, in despair of getting anything better, advocate this measure, are met with the objection that it is very like making a child practise the use of a knife, fork, and spoon without giving it a particle of meat. I really don't know what reply is to be made to such an objection.

But it would be unprofitable to spend more time in disentangling, or rather in showing up the knots in, the ravelled skeins of our neighbours. Much more to the purpose is it to ask if we possess any clew of our own which may guide us among these entanglements.

And by way of a beginning, let us ask ourselves—What is education? Above all things, what is our ideal of a thoroughly liberal education?—of that education which, if we could begin life again, we would give ourselves—of that education which, if we could mould the fates to our own will, we would give our children. Well, I know not what may be your conceptions upon this matter, but I will tell you mine, and I hope I shall find that our views are not very discrepant.

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game at chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces, to have a notion of a gambit and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth, that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allow-

ance for ignorance. To the man who plays well the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways, and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. For me, education means neither more nor less than this. Anything which professes to call itself education must be tried by this standard, and if it fails to stand the test, I will not call it education, whatever may be the force of authority, or of numbers, upon the other side.

It is important to remember that, in strictness, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Take an extreme case. Suppose that an adult man, in the full vigour of his faculties, could be suddenly placed in the world, as Adam is said to have been, and then left to do as he best might. How long would he be left uneducated. Not five minutes. Nature would begin to teach him, through the eye, the ear, the touch, the properties of objects. Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the

man would receive an education, which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments.

And if to this solitary man entered a second Adam, or, better still, an Eve, a new and greater world, that of social and moral phenomena, would be revealed. Joys and woes, compared with which all others might seem but faint shadows, would spring from the new relations. Happiness and sorrow would take the place of the coarser monitors, pleasure and pain, but conduct would still be shaped by the observation of the natural consequences of actions, or, in other words, by the laws or the nature of man.

To every one of us the world was once as fresh and new as to Adam. And then, long before we were susceptible of any other mode of instruction, Nature took us in hand, and every minute of waking life brought its educational influence, shaping our actions into rough accordance with Nature's laws, so that we might not be ended untimely by too gross disobedience. Nor should I speak of this process of education as past for any one, be he as old as he may. For every man the world is as fresh as it was at the first day, and as full of untold novelties for him who has the eyes to see them. And Nature is still continuing her patient education of us in that great university, the universe, of which we are all members—Nature having no Test-Acts.

Those who take honours in Nature's university, who learn the laws which govern men and things and obey them, are the really great and successful men in this world. The great mass of mankind are the "Poll," who pick up just enough to get through without much discredit. Those who won't learn at all are plucked;

and then you can't come up again. Nature's pluck means extermination.

Thus the question of compulsory education is settled so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill on that question was framed and passed long ago. But, like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation. Ignorance is visited as sharply as wilful disobedience—incapacity meets with the same punishment as crime. Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, and the blow first—but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed.

The object of what we commonly call education—that education in which man intervenes and which I shall distinguish as artificial education—is to make good these defects in Nature's methods, to prepare the child to receive Nature's education, neither incapably nor ignorantly, nor with wilful disobedience, and to understand the preliminary symptoms of her displeasure, without waiting for the box on the ear. In short, all artificial education ought to be an anticipation of natural education. And a liberal education is an artificial education, which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and to seize upon the rewards which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties.

That man, I think, has had a liberal education, who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order, ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of

the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience, who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself

Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education; for he is, as completely as a man can be, in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her, and she of him. They will get on together rarely; she as his ever beneficent mother, he as her mouth-piece, her conscious self, her minister and interpreter.

Where is such an education as this to be had? Where is there any approximation to it? Has any one tried to found such an education? Looking over the length and breadth of these islands, I am afraid that all these questions must receive a negative answer. Consider our primary schools, and what is taught in them. A child learns —

1 *To read, write, and cipher, more or less well;* but in a very large proportion of cases not so well as to take pleasure in reading, or to be able to write the commonest letter properly

2 A quantity of dogmatic theology, of which the child, nine times out of ten, understands next to nothing

4. Mixed up with this, so as to seem to stand or fall with it, a few of the broadest and simplest principles of morality. This, to my mind, is much as if a man of science should make the story of the fall of the apple in Newton's garden an integral part of the doctrine of gravitation, and teach it as of equal authority with the law of the inverse squares

4. A good deal of Jewish history and Syrian geog-

raphy, and, perhaps, a little something about English history and the geography of the child's own country. But I doubt if there is a primary school in England in which hangs a map of the hundred in which the village lies, so that the children may be practically taught by it what a map means.

5. A certain amount of regularity, attentive obedience, respect for others obtained by fear, if the master be incompetent or foolish; by love and reverence, if he be wise

So far as this school course embraces a training in the theory and practice of obedience to the moral laws of Nature, I gladly admit, not only that it contains a valuable educational element, but that, so far, it deals with the most valuable and important part of all education. Yet, contrast what is done in this direction with what might be done; with the time given to matters of comparatively no importance, with the absence of any attention to things of the highest moment, and one is tempted to think of Falstaff's bill and "the halfpenny worth of bread to all that quantity of sack"

Let us consider what a child thus "educated" knows, and what it does not know. Begin with the most important topic of all—morality, as the guide of conduct. The child knows well enough that some acts meet with approbation and some with disapprobation. But it has never heard that there lies in the nature of things a reason for every moral law, as cogent and as well defined as that which underlies every physical law, that stealing and lying are just as certain to be followed by evil consequences, as putting your hand in the fire, or jumping out of a garret window. Again, though the scholar may have been made acquainted, in dogmatic fashion, with the broad laws of morality, he has had no training in

the application of those laws to the difficult problems which result from the complex conditions of modern civilization. Would it not be very hard to expect any one to solve a problem in conic sections who had merely been taught the axioms and definitions of mathematical science?

A workman has to bear hard labour, and perhaps privation, while he sees others rolling in wealth, and feeding their dogs with what would keep his children from starvation. Would it not be well to have helped that man to calm the natural promptings of discontent by showing him, in his youth, the necessary connection of the moral law which prohibits stealing with the stability of society—by proving to him, once for all, that it is better for his own people, better for himself, better for future generations, that he should starve than steal? If you have no foundation of knowledge or habit of thought to work upon, what chance have you of persuading a hungry man that a capitalist is not a thief “with a circumbendibus?” And if he honestly believes that, of what avail is it to quote the commandment against stealing, when he proposes to make the capitalist disgorge?

Again, the child learns absolutely nothing of the history or the political organization of his own country. His general impression is that everything of much importance happened a very long while ago, and that the Queen and the gentlefolks govern the country much after the fashion of King David and the elders and nobles of Israel—his sole models. Will you give a man with this much information a vote? In easy times he sells it for a pot of beer. Why should he not? It is of about as much use to him as a chignon, and he knows as much what to do with it, for any other purpose. In bad times, on the contrary, he applies his simple theory of govern-

ment, and believes that his rulers are the cause of his sufferings—a belief which sometimes bears remarkable practical fruits.

Least of all, does the child gather from this primary “education” of ours a conception of the laws of the physical world, or of the relations of cause and effect therein. And this is the more to be lamented, as the poor are especially exposed to physical evils, and are more interested in removing them than any other class of the community. If any one is concerned in knowing the ordinary laws of mechanics, one would think it is the hand-labourer, whose daily toil lies among levers and pulleys, or among the other implements of artisan work. And if any one is interested in the laws of health, it is the poor workman, whose strength is wasted by ill-prepared food, whose health is sapped by bad ventilation and bad drainage, and half whose children are massacred by disorders which might be prevented. Not only does our present primary education carefully abstain from hinting to the workman that some of his greatest evils are *traceable to mere physical agencies, which could be removed by energy, patience, and frugality*, but it does worse—it renders him, so far as it can, deaf to those who could help him, and tries to substitute an Oriental submission to what is falsely declared to be the will of God, for his natural tendency to strive after a better condition.

What wonder then, if very recently an appeal has been made to statistics for the profoundly foolish purpose of showing that education is of no good—that it diminishes neither misery, nor crime, among the masses of mankind? I reply, why should the thing which has been called education do either the one or the other? If I am a knave or a fool, teaching me to read and write

won't make me less of either one or the other—unless somebody shows me how to put my reading and writing to wise and good purposes.

Suppose any one were to argue that medicine is of no use, because it could be proved statistically that the percentage of deaths was just the same, among people who had been taught how to open a medicine chest, and among those who did not so much as know the key by sight. The argument is absurd, but it is not more preposterous than that against which I am contending. The only medicine for suffering, crime, and all the other woes of mankind, is wisdom. Teach a man to read and write, and you have put into his hands the great keys of the wisdom box. But it is quite another matter whether he ever opens the box or not. And he is as likely to poison as to cure himself, if, without guidance, he swallows the first drug that comes to hand. In these times a man may as well be purblind, as unable to read—lame, as unable to write. But I protest that, if I thought the alternative were a necessary one, I would rather that the children of the poor should grow up ignorant of both these mighty arts, than that they should remain ignorant of that knowledge to which these arts are means.

It may be said that all these animadversions may apply to primary schools, but that the higher schools, at any rate, must be allowed to give a liberal education. In fact, they professedly sacrifice everything else to this object.

Let us inquire into this matter. What do the higher schools, those to which the great middle class of the country sends its children, teach, over and above the instruction given in the primary schools? There is a little more reading and writing of English. But, for all that, every one knows that it is a rare thing to find

a boy of the middle or upper classes who can read aloud decently, or who can put his thoughts on paper in clear and grammatical (to say nothing of good or elegant) language. The "ciphering" of the lower schools expands into elementary mathematics in the higher; into arithmetic, with a little algebra, a little Euclid. But I doubt if one boy in five hundred has ever heard the explanation of a rule of arithmetic, or knows his Euclid otherwise than by rote.

Of theology, the middle-class schoolboy gets rather less than poorer children, less absolutely and less relatively, because there are so many other claims upon his attention. I venture to say that, in the great majority of cases, his ideas on this subject when he leaves school are of the most shadowy and vague description, and associated with painful impressions of the weary hours spent in learning collects and catechism by heart.

Modern geography, modern history, modern literature, the English language as a language, the whole circle of the sciences, physical, moral, and social, are even more completely ignored in the higher than in the lower schools. Up till within a few years back, a boy might have passed through any one of the great public schools with the greatest distinction and credit, and might never so much as have heard of one of the subjects I have just mentioned. He might never have heard that the earth goes round the sun, that England underwent a great revolution in 1688; and France another in 1789, that there once lived certain notable men called Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Voltaire, Goethe, Schiller. The first might be a German and the last an Englishman for anything he could tell you to the contrary. And as for science, the only idea the word would suggest to his mind would be dexterity in

boxing.

I have said that this was the state of things a few years back, for the sake of the few righteous who are to be found among the educational cities of the plain. But I would not have you too sanguine about the result, if you sound the minds of the existing generation of public schoolboys, on such topics as those I have mentioned.

Now let us pause to consider this wonderful state of affairs; for the time will come when Englishmen will quote it as the stock example of the stolid stupidity of their ancestors in the nineteenth century. The most thoroughly commercial people, the greatest voluntary wanderers and colonists the world has ever seen, are precisely the middle classes of this country. If there be a people which has been busy making history on the great scale for the last three hundred years,—and the most profoundly interesting history—history which, if it happened to be that of Greece or Rome, we should study with avidity,—it is the English. If there be a people which, during the same period, has developed a remarkable literature, it is our own. If there be a nation whose prosperity depends absolutely and wholly upon their mastery over the forces of Nature, upon their intelligent apprehension of, and obedience to, the laws of the creation and distribution of wealth, and of the stable equilibrium of the forces of society, it is precisely this nation. And yet this is what these wonderful people tell their sons: “At the cost of from one to two thousand pounds of our hard-earned money, we devote twelve of the most precious years of your lives to school. There you shall toil, or be supposed to toil; but there you shall not learn one single thing of all those you will most want to know,

directly you leave school and enter upon the practical business of life. You will in all probability go into business, but you shall not know where or how any article of commerce is produced, or the difference between an export or an import, or the meaning of the word 'capital.' You will very likely settle in a colony, but you shall not know whether Tasmania is part of New South Wales, or *vice versa*

"Very probably you may become a manufacturer, but you shall not be provided with the means of understanding the working of one of your own steam-engines, or the nature of the raw products you employ; and when you are asked to buy a patent, you shall not have the slightest means of judging whether the inventor is an impostor who is contravening the elementary principles of science, or a man who will make you as rich as Croesus

"You will very likely get into the House of Commons. You will have to take your share in making laws which may prove a blessing or a curse to millions of men. But you shall not hear one word respecting the political organization of your country, the meaning of the controversy between free-traders and protectionists shall never have been mentioned to you, you shall not so much as know that there are such things as economical laws

"The mental power which will be of most importance in your daily life will be the power of seeing things as they are without regard to authority, and of drawing accurate general conclusions from particular facts. But at school and at college you shall know of no source of truth but authority, nor exercise your reasoning faculty upon anything but deduction from that which is laid down by authority.

"You will have to weary your soul with work, and many a time eat your bread in sorrow and in bitterness, and you shall not have learned to take refuge in the great source of pleasure without alloy, the serene resting-place for worn human nature,—the world of art."

Said I not rightly that we are a wonderful people? I am quite prepared to allow, that education entirely devoted to these omitted subjects might not be a completely liberal education. But is an education which ignores them all a liberal education? Nay, is it too much to say that the education which should embrace these subjects and no others, would be a real education, though an incomplete one, while an education which omits them is really not an education at all, but a more or less useful course of intellectual gymnastics?

For what does the middle-class school put in the place of all these things which are left out? It substitutes what is usually comprised under the compendious title of the "classics"—that is to say, the languages, the literature, and the history of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the geography of so much of the world as was known to these two great nations of antiquity. Now, do not expect me to depreciate the earnest and enlightened pursuit of classical learning. I have not the least desire to speak ill of such occupations, nor any sympathy with those who run them down. On the contrary, if my opportunities had lain in that direction, there is no investigation into which I could have thrown myself with greater delight than that of antiquity.

What science can present greater attractions than philology? How can a lover of literary excellence fail to rejoice in the ancient masterpieces? And with what consistency could I, whose business lies so much in the attempt to decypher the past, and to build up intelligible

forms out of the scattered fragments of long-extinct beings, fail to take a sympathetic, though an unlearned, interest in the labours of a Niebuhr, a Gibbon, or a Grote? Classical history is a great section of the palæontology of man; and I have the same double respect for it as for other kinds of palæontology—that is to say, a respect for the facts which it establishes as for all facts, and a still greater respect for it as a preparation for the discovery of a law of progress

But if the classics were taught as they might be taught—if boys and girls were instructed in Greek and Latin, not merely as languages, but as illustrations of philological science, if a vivid picture of life on the shores of the Mediterranean, two thousand years ago, were imprinted on the minds of scholars; if ancient history were taught, not as a weary series of feuds and fights, but traced to its causes in such men placed under such conditions, if, lastly, the study of the classical books were followed in such a manner as to impress boys with their beauties, and with the grand simplicity of their *statement of the everlasting problems of human life*, instead of with their verbal and grammatical peculiarities; I still think it as little proper that they should form the basis of a liberal education for our contemporaries, as I should think it fitting to make that sort of palæontology with which I am familiar, the backbone of modern education

It is wonderful how close a parallel to classical training could be made out of that palæontology to which I refer. In the first place I could get up an osteological primer so arid, so pedantic in its terminology, so altogether distasteful to the youthful mind, as to beat the recent famous production of the head-masters out of the field in all these excellences. Next, I could exercise

my boys upon easy fossils, and bring out all their powers of memory and all their ingenuity in the application of my osteo-grammatical rules to the interpretation, or construing, of those fragments. To those who had reached the higher classes, I might supply odd bones to be built up into animals, giving great honour and reward to him who succeeded in fabricating monsters most entirely in accordance with the rules. That would answer to verse-making and essay-writing in the dead languages.

To be sure, if a great comparative anatomist were to look at these fabrications he might shake his head or laugh. But what then? Would such a catastrophe destroy the parallel? What think you would Cicero or Horace say to the production of the best sixth form gong? And would not Terence stop his ears and run out if he could be present at an English performance of his own plays? Would Hamlet, in the mouths of a set of French actors, who should insist on pronouncing English after the fashion of their own tongue, be more hideously ridiculous?

But it will be said that I am forgetting the beauty, and the human interest which appertain to classical studies. To this I reply that it is only a very strong man who can appreciate the charms of a landscape as he is toiling up a steep hill along a bad road. What with short-windedness, stones, ruts, and a pervading sense of the wisdom of rest and be thankful, most of us have little enough sense of the beautiful under these circumstances. The ordinary schoolboy is precisely in this case. He finds Parnassus uncommonly steep, and there is no chance of his having much time or inclination to look about him till he gets to the top. And nine times out of ten he does not get to the top.

But if this be a fair picture of the results of classi-

cal teaching at its best,—and I gather from those who have authority to speak on such matters that it is so;—what is to be said of classical teaching at its worst, or in other words, of the classics of our ordinary middle-class schools? I will tell you. It means getting up endless forms and rules by heart. It means turning Latin and Greek into English, for the mere sake of being able to do it, and without the smallest regard to the worth, or worthlessness, of the author read. It means the learning of innumerable, not always decent, fables in such a shape that the meaning they once had is dried up into utter trash; and the only impression left upon a boy's mind is, that the people who believed such things must have been the greatest idiots the world ever saw. And it means, finally, that after a dozen years spent at this kind of work, the sufferer shall be incompetent to interpret a passage in an author he has not already got up, that he shall loathe the sight of a Greek or Latin book, and that he shall never open or think of a classical writer again, until, wonderful to relate, he insists upon submitting his sons to the same process.

These be your gods, O Israel! For the sake of this net result (and respectability) the British father denies his children all the knowledge they might turn to account in life, not merely for the achievement of vulgar success, but for guidance in the great crises of human existence. This is the stone he offers to those whom he is bound by the strongest and tenderest ties to feed with bread.

If primary and secondary education are in this unsatisfactory state, what is to be said to the universities? This is an awful subject, and one I almost fear to touch with my unhallowed hands, but I can tell you what those say who have authority to speak.

The Rector of Lincoln College, in his lately published valuable "Suggestions for Academical Organization with Especial Reference to Oxford," tells us (p. 127) :—

"The colleges were, in their origin, endowments, not for the elements of a general liberal education, but for the prolonged study of special and professional faculties by men of riper age. The universities embraced both these objects. The colleges, while they incidentally aided in elementary education, were specially devoted to the highest learning

"This was the theory of the middle-age university and the design of collegiate foundations in their origin. Time and circumstances have brought about a total change. The colleges no longer promote the researches of science or direct professional study. Here and there college walls may shelter an occasional student, but not in larger proportions than may be found in private life. Elementary teaching of youths under twenty is now the only function performed by the university, and almost the only object of college endowments. Colleges were homes for the life-study of the highest and most abstruse parts of knowledge. They have become boarding schools in which the elements of the learned languages are taught to youths."

If Mr Pattison's high position and his obvious love and respect for his university be insufficient to convince the outside world that language so severe is yet no more than just, the authority of the Commissioners who reported on the University of Oxford in 1850 is open to no challenge. Yet they write —

"It is generally acknowledged that both Oxford and the country at large suffer greatly from the absence of a body of learned men devoting their lives to the cultivation

of science and to the direction of academical education.

"The fact that so few books of profound research emanate from the University of Oxford, materially impairs its character as a seat of learning, and consequently its hold on the respect of the nation."

Cambridge can claim no exemption from the reproaches addressed to Oxford. And thus there seems no escape from the admission that what we fondly call our great seats of learning are simply "boarding schools" for bigger boys, that learned men are not more numerous in them than out of them, that the advancement of knowledge is not the object of fellows of colleges; that, in the philosophic calm and meditative stillness of their greenswarded courts, philosophy does not thrive, and meditation bears few fruits

It is my great good fortune to reckon amongst my friends resident members of both universities, who are men of learning and research, zealous cultivators of science, keeping before their minds a noble ideal of a university, and doing their best to make that ideal a reality; and, to me, they would necessarily typify the universities, did not the authoritative statements I have quoted compel me to believe that they are exceptional, and not representative men. Indeed, upon calm consideration, several circumstances lead me to think that the Rector of Lincoln College and the Commissioners cannot be far wrong.

I believe there can be no doubt that the foreigner who should wish to become acquainted with the scientific or the literary activity of modern England would simply lose his time and his pains if he visited our universities with that object

And as for works of profound research on any subject and, above all, in that classical lore for which

the universities profess to sacrifice almost everything else, why, a third-rate, poverty-stricken German university turns out more produce of that kind in one year than our vast and wealthy foundations elaborate in ten.

Ask the man who is investigating any question, profoundly and thoroughly,—be it historical, philosophical, philological, physical, literary, or theological; who is trying to make himself master of any abstract subject (except, perhaps, political economy and geology, both of which are intensely Anglican sciences),—whether he is not compelled to read half a dozen times as many German as English books? And whether, of these English books, more than one in ten is the work of a fellow of a college or a professor of an English university?

Is this from any lack of power in the English as compared with the German mind? The countrymen of Grote and of Mill, of Faraday, of Robert Brown, of Lyell, and of Darwin, to go no further back than the contemporaries of men of middle age, can afford to smile at such a suggestion. England can show now, as she has been able to show in every generation since civilization spread over the West, individual men who hold their own against the world, and keep alive the old tradition of her intellectual eminence.

But in the majority of cases these men are what they are in virtue of their native intellectual force, and of a strength of character which will not recognize impediments. They are not trained in the courts of the Temple of Science, but storm the walls of that edifice in all sorts of irregular ways, and with much loss of time and power, in order to obtain their legitimate positions.

Our universities not only do not encourage such men; do not offer them positions, in which it should be their highest duty to do, thoroughly, that which they are most

capable of doing; but, as far as possible, university training shuts out of the minds of those among them, who are subjected to it, the prospect that there is anything in the world for which they are specially fitted. Imagine the success of the attempt to still the intellectual hunger of any of the men I have mentioned, by putting before him, as the object of existence, the successful mimicry of the measure of a Greek song, or the roll of Ciceronian prose! Imagine how much success would be likely to attend the attempt to persuade such men, that the education which leads to perfection in such elegancies is alone to be called culture; while the facts of history, the process of thought, the conditions of moral and social existence, and the laws of physical nature, are left to be dealt with as they may by outside barbarians!

It is not thus that the German universities, from being beneath notice a century ago, have become what they are now—the most intensely cultivated and the most productive intellectual corporations the world has ever seen

The student who repairs to them sees in the list of classes and of professors a fair picture of the world of knowledge. Whatever he needs to know there is some one ready to teach him, some one competent to discipline him in the way of learning, whatever his special bent, let him but be able and diligent, and in due time he shall find distinction and a career. Among his professors, he sees men whose names are known and revered throughout the civilized world, and their living example infects him with a noble ambition and a love for the spirit of work.

The Germans dominate the intellectual world by virtue of the same simple secret as that which made

Napoleon the master of old Europe. They have declared *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, and every Bursch marches with a professor's gown in his knapsack. Let him become a great scholar or man of science, and ministers will compete for his services. In Germany they do not leave the chance of his holding the office he would render illustrious to the tender mercies of a hot canvass, and the final wisdom of a mob of country parsons.

In short, in Germany the universities are exactly what the Rector of Lincoln and the Commissioners tell us the English universities are not, that is to say, corporations "of learned men devoting their lives to the cultivation of science and the direction of academical education." They are not "boarding schools for youths" nor clerical seminaries, but institutions for the higher culture of men, in which the theological faculty is of no more importance or prominence than the rest, and which are truly "universities," since they strive to represent and embody the totality of human knowledge, and to find room for all forms of intellectual activity.

May zealous and clear-headed reformers like Mr. Pattison succeed in their noble endeavours to shape our universities towards some such ideals as this, without losing what is valuable and distinctive in their social tone! But until they have succeeded, a liberal education will be no more obtainable in our Oxford and Cambridge Universities than in our public schools.

If I am justified in my conception of the ideal of a liberal education, and if what I have said about the existing educational institutions of the country is also true, it is clear that the two have no sort of relation to one another; that the best of our schools and the most complete of our university trainings give but a narrow,

one-sided, and essentially illiberal education—while the worst give what is really next to no education at all. The South London Working Men's College could not copy any of these institutions if it would. I am bold enough to express the conviction that it ought not if it could

For what is wanted is the reality and not the mere name of a liberal education, and this College must steadily set before itself the ambition to be able to give that education sooner or later. At present we are but beginning, sharpening our educational tools, as it were, and, except a modicum of physical science, we are not able to offer much more than is to be found in an ordinary school

Moral and social science—one of the greatest and most fruitful of our future classes, I hope—at present lacks only one thing in our programme, and that is a teacher. A considerable want, no doubt, but it must be recollected that it is much better to want a teacher than to want the desire to learn

Further, we need what, for want of a better name, I must call Physical Geography. What I mean is that which the Germans call "*Erdkunde*" It is a description of the earth, of its place and relation to other bodies; of its general structure, and of its great features—winds, tides, mountains, plains, of the chief forms of the vegetable and animal worlds, of the varieties of man. It is the peg upon which the greatest quantity of useful and entertaining scientific information can be suspended

Literature is not upon the College programme, but I hope some day to see it there. For literature is the greatest of all sources of refined pleasure, and one of the great uses of a liberal education is to enable us to enjoy that pleasure. There is scope enough for the

purposes of a liberal education in the study of the rich treasures of our own language alone. All that is needed is direction, and the cultivation of a refined taste by attention to sound criticism. But there is no reason why French and German should not be mastered sufficiently to read what is worth reading in those languages with pleasure and with profit

And finally, by and by, we must have History; treated not as a succession of battles and dynasties; not as a series of biographies, not as evidence that Providence has always been on the side of either Whigs or Tories; but as the development of man in times past, and in other conditions than our own

But, as it is one of the principles of our College to be self-supporting, the public must lead, and we must follow, in these matters. If my hearers take to heart what I have said about liberal education, they will desire these things, and I doubt not we shall be able to supply them. But we must wait till the demand is made

Thomas Henry Huxley (1825—1895), biologist and essayist, was born near London, and after some study of medicine sailed as assistant surgeon in the ship *Rattlesnake* to the Southern Seas, where for four years he studied marine animals. After leaving the Navy he supported himself largely by literary work, but found time to serve on many Royal Commissions and to act as examiner and professor in various institutions. He was Secretary of the Royal Society, and became its President in 1883. In 1892 he was made a Privy Councillor. Besides his purely scientific works he published a dozen volumes of essays which show that he was not only a man of science but also a man of the world, profoundly interested in the problems of human conduct and belief. "Whether the subject was biology or philosophy, education or politics, fisheries or slavery, he brought to each and all a keen penetrating insight, a wide human outlook and fearless honesty."

To Huxley science and literature were not two things, but two sides of one thing. His foremost concern was to write with lucidity, accuracy, and effect, he was not greatly concerned, as were Pater and Stevenson, with the niceties of style. It was the thought, not the words, that interested him, and his skill in the arrangement and illustration of his ideas is the most notable feature of all his writings. Nevertheless he was a man of wide reading and much literary culture, and had he not devoted so much time to scientific work and to controversy he might have been a fine literary critic. The essay on "A Liberal Education" gives abundant evidence of his command of apt allusion, of striking phrase-making, and of the structure of the paragraph. In all his work "the style is the man."

A LIBERAL EDUCATION, AND WHERE TO FIND IT

This is an address to the South London Working Men's College, delivered in 1868 and afterwards published in "Macmillan's Magazine." Huxley was one of the founders of the Inter-

national Educational Society, whose aim was to promote the study of the sciences and modern languages. As a member of the London School Board in 1870-71 he advocated physical training, elementary science, drawing, domestic economy, and the Bible in schools. In his views of education he shows the same insight into essentials, the same clearness of vision as he displays in his scientific writings. His definition of a liberal education, as formulated in this essay has never been superseded. Many of the educational changes recommended by Huxley have now come to pass, largely owing to his efforts.

- 51 **Ichabod**—"the glory is departed," a Hebrew expression in the Bible (I *Samuel*)
- 53 **senior wranglership**—highest mathematical honours at Cambridge University
- 53 **double-first**—first class honours in two subjects at Oxford University
- 54 **compulsory education**—the Education Act of 1876 made elementary education compulsory in England.
- 55 **gambit**—an opening in the game of chess
- 55. **check**—when the king in a game of chess is exposed to direct attack
- 56 **Retzsch**—a German painter (1779—1857)
- 57 **Test-Acts**—Acts to exclude Catholics from places in the government or the universities
- 57 **Poll**—Cambridge University slang for the passmen, who do not take an honours degree
- 57 **plucked**—University students who fail in their examinations are said to be 'plucked' or 'ploughed'
- 59 **rarely**—excellently
- 60 **hundred**—an old subdivision of a country or shire
- 60 **Falstaff's bill**—see Shakespeare's I Henry IV, act ii,
- 61 **circumbendibus**—roundabout method
- 61 **chignon**—mass of hair on a pad at back of head.
- 64 **collects**—short prayers in the English Prayer Book
- 64 **Chaucer, etc.**—Chaucer (1340—1400), Shakespeare (1564—1616), Milton (1608—1674); Voltaire (1694—1778), a famous French thinker, Goethe (1749—1832), the

- greatest of German writers, **Schiller** (1750—1805),
great German dramatist
66. **Croesus**—the wealthy king of Lydia, reigned B C 560—546.
68. **Niebuhr**—German scholar and historian (1776—1831),
Gibbon; the greatest English historian (1737—1794);
Grote, author of a History of Greece (1794—1871).
68. **palaeontology**—the study of extinct plants and animals.
69. **Cicero**—Roman orator (B C 106—43), **Horace**, Roman
lyric poet (B C 65—8), **Terence**; the greatest Latin
writer of comedy (B C 185—159)
- 69 **sixth form**—the senior class in a high school
- 69 **Parnassus**—a mountain in Greece, the abode of the Muses
of poetry and other arts
- 70 **These be your gods**—words used by king Jeroboam when
calling upon the Israelites to worship golden images (see
the Bible, I Kings)
- 72 **Rector**—the head of Lincoln College, Oxford, was Mark
Pattison (1813—1884), author of many essays and re-
views
- 73 **Mill**—John Stuart Mill writer on philosophy and political
economy (1806—1873)
- Faraday**—see note, Froude's "On Progress," page 41
- Robert Brown**—a celebrated botanist (1773—1858)
- Lyell**—Sir Charles Lyell geologist (1797—1815)
- Darwin**—Charles Darwin (1809—1882) was the discoverer
of Natural Selection, and expounded the theory of
organic evolution Huxley was an ardent champion of
Darwinism
- 75 **Bursch**—a German university student
- 76 **Erdkunde**—general knowledge of the Earth

TWO EARLY FRENCH STORIES

WALTER PATER

THE history of the Renaissance ends in France, and carries us away from Italy to the beautiful cities of the country of the Loire. But it was in France also, in a very important sense, that the Renaissance had begun. French writers, who are fond of connecting the creations of Italian genius with a French origin, who tell us how Saint Francis of Assisi took not his name only, but all those notions of chivalry and romantic love which so deeply penetrated his thoughts, from a French source, how Boccaccio borrowed the outlines of his stories from the old French *fabliaux*, and how Dante himself expressly connects the origin of the art of miniature-painting with the city of Paris, have often dwelt on this notion of a Renaissance in the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, a Renaissance within the limits of the middle age itself—a brilliant, but in part abortive effort to do for human life and the human mind what was afterwards done in the fifteenth. The word *Renaissance*, indeed, is now generally used to denote not merely the revival of classical antiquity which took place in the fifteenth century, and to which the word was first applied, but a whole complex movement, of which that revival of classical antiquity was but one element or symptom. For us the Renaissance is the name of a many-sided but yet united movement, in which the love of the things of the intellect and the imagination for their own sake, the desire for a more liberal and comely ways of conceiving life, make themselves felt, urging those who experience this desire to search out first one

and then another means of intellectual or imaginative enjoyment, and directing them not only to the discovery of old and forgotten sources of this enjoyment but to the divination of fresh sources thereof—new experiences, new subjects of poetry, new forms of art. Of such feeling there was a great outbreak in the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the following century. Here and there, under rare and happy conditions, in Pointed architecture, in the doctrines of romantic love, in the poetry of Provence, the rude strength of the middle age turns to sweetness; and the taste for sweetness generated there becomes the seed of the classical revival in it, prompting it constantly to seek after the springs of perfect sweetness in the Hellenic world. And coming after a long period in which this instinct had been crushed, that true "dark age," in which so many sources of intellectual and imaginative enjoyment had actually disappeared, this outbreak is rightly called a Renaissance, a revival.

Theories which bring into connexion with each other modes of thought and feeling, periods of taste, forms of art and poetry, which the narrowness of men's minds constantly tends to oppose to each other, have a great stimulus for the intellect, and are almost always worth understanding. It is so with this theory of a Renaissance within the middle age, which seeks to establish a continuity between the most characteristic work of that period, the sculpture of Chartres, the windows of Le Mans, and the work of the later Renaissance, the work of Jean Cousin and Germain Pilon, thus healing that rupture between the middle age and the Renaissance which has so often been exaggerated. But it is not so much the ecclesiastical art of the middle age, its sculpture and painting—work certainly done in a great measure for pleasure's sake, in which even a secular, a rebellious

spirit often betrays itself—but rather its profane poetry, the poetry of Provence, and the magnificent aftergrowth of that poetry in Italy and France, which those French writers have in view when they speak of this medieval Renaissance. In that poetry, earthy passion, with its intimacy, its freedom, its variety—the liberty of the heart—makes itself felt, and the name of Abelard, the great scholar and the great lover, connects the expression of this liberty of heart with the free play of human intelligence around all subjects presented to it, with the liberty of the intellect, as that age understood it

Every one knows the legend of Abelard, a legend hardly less passionate, certainly not less characteristic of the middle age, than the legend of Tannhauser; how the famous and comely clerk, in whom Wisdom herself, self-possessed, pleasant, and discreet, seemed to sit enthroned, came to live in the house of a canon of the church of *Notre-Dame*, where dwelt a girl, Heloise, believed to be the old priest's orphan niece; how the old priest had testified his love for her by giving her an education then unrivalled, so that rumour asserted that, through the knowledge of languages, enabling her to penetrate into the mysteries of the older world, she had become a sorceress, like the Celtic druidesses, and how as Abelard and Heloise sat together at home there, to refine a little further on the nature of abstract ideas, "Love made himself of the party with them" You conceive the temptations of the scholar, who, in such dreamy tranquillity, amid the bright and busy spectacle of the "Island," lived in a world of something like shadows; and that for one who knew so well how to assign its exact value to every abstract thought, those restraints which he on the consciences of other men had been relaxed. It appears that he composed many verses in

the vulgar tongue: already the young men sang them on the quay below the house. Those songs, says M. de Remusat, were probably in the taste of the *Trouveres*, "of whom he was one of the first in date, or, so to speak, the predecessor." It is the same spirit which has moulded the famous "letters," written in the quaint Latin of the middle age.

At the foot of that early Gothic tower, which the next generation raised to grace the precincts of Abelard's school, on the "Mountain of Saint Genéviève," the historian Michelet sees in thought "a terrible assembly; not the hearers of Abelard alone, fifty bishops, twenty cardinals, two popes, the whole body of scholastic philosophy, not only the learned Heloise, the teaching of languages, and the Renaissance, but Arnold of Brescia—that is to say, the revolution." And so from the rooms of this shadowy house by the Seine side we see that spirit going abroad, with its qualities already well defined, its intimacy, its languid sweetness, its rebellion, its subtle skill in dividing the elements of human passion, its care for physical beauty, its worship of the body, which penetrated the early literature of Italy, and finds an echo even in Dante.

That Abelard is not mentioned in the *Divine Comedy* may appear a singular omission to the reader of Dante, who seems to have woven into the texture of his work whatever had impressed him as either effective in colour or spiritually significant among the recorded incidents of actual life. Nowhere in his great poem do we find the name, nor so much as an allusion to the story of one who had left so deep a mark on the philosophy of which Dante was an eager student, of whom in the *Latin Quarter*, and from the lips of scholar or teacher in the University of Paris, during his sojourn among them, he

can hardly have failed to hear. We can only suppose that he had indeed considered the story and the man, and abstained from passing judgment as to his place in the scheme of "eternal justice"

In the famous legend of Tannhauser, the erring knight makes his way to Rome, to seek absolution at the centre of Christian religion. "So soon," thought and said the Pope, "as the staff in his hand should bud and blossom, so soon might the soul of Tannhauser be saved, and no sooner," and it came to pass not long after that the dry wood of a staff which the Pope had carried in his hand was covered with leaves and flowers. So, in the cloister of Godstow, a petrified tree was shown of which the nuns told that the fair Rosamond, who had died among them, had declared that, the tree being then alive and green, it would be changed into stone at the hour of her salvation. When Abelard died, like Tannhauser, he was on his way to Rome. What might have happened had he reached his journey's end is uncertain, and it is in this uncertain twilight that his relation to the general beliefs of his age has always remained. In this, as in other things, he prefigures the character of the Renaissance, that movement in which, in various ways, the human mind wins for itself a new kingdom of feeling and sensation and thought, not opposed to but only beyond and independent of the spiritual system then actually realised. The opposition into which Abelard is thrown, which gives its colour to his career, which breaks his soul to pieces, is a no less subtle opposition than that between the merely professional, official, hireling ministers of that system, with their ignorant worship of system for its own sake, and the true child of light, the humanist, with reason and heart and senses quick, while theirs were almost dead.

He reaches out towards, he attains, modes of ideal living beyond the prescribed limits of that system, though in essential germ, it may be, contained within it. As always happens, the adherents of the poorer and narrower culture had no sympathy with, because no understanding of, a culture richer and more ample than their own. After the discovery of wheat they would still live upon acorns—*après l'invention du ble ils voulaient encore vivre du gland*, and would hear of no service to the higher needs of humanity with instruments not of their forging.

But the human spirit, bold through those needs was too strong for them. Abelard and Heloise write their letters—letters with a wonderful outpouring of soul—in medieval Latin, and Abelard, though he composes songs in the vulgar tongue, writes also in Latin those treatises in which he tries to find a ground of reality below the abstractions of philosophy, as one bent on trying all things by their congruity with human experience, who had felt the hand of Heloise, and looked into her eyes, and tested the resources of humanity in her great and energetic nature. Yet it is only a little later, early in the thirteenth century, that French prose romance begins; and in one of the pretty volumes of the *Bibliothèque Elzevirienne* some of the most striking fragments of it may be found, edited with much intelligence. In one of these thirteenth-century stories, *Li Amis de Ame et Amile*, that free play of human affection, of the claims of which Abelard's story is an assertion, makes itself felt in the incidents of a great friendship, a friendship pure and generous, pushed to a sort of passionate exaltation, and more than faithful unto death. Such comradeship, though instances of it are to be found everywhere, is still especially a classical motive; Chaucer expressing the sentiment of it so strongly

in an antique tale, that one knows not whether the love of both Palamon and Arcite for Emelya, or of those two for each other, is the chief subject of the *Knight's Tale*—

*He cast his eyen upon Emelya,
And therewithal he bleynte and cried, ah!
As that he stongcn were unto the herte*

What reader does not refer something of the bitterness of that cry to the spoiling, already foreseen, of the fair friendship, which had made the prison of the two lads sweet hitherto with its daily offices?

The friendship of Anus and Amile is deepened by the romantic circumstance of an entire personal resemblance between the two heroes, through which they pass for each other again and again, and thereby into many strange adventures, that curious interest of the *Doppelgänger*, which begins among the stars with the Dioscuri, being entwined in and out through all the incidents of the story, like an outward token of the inward similitude of their souls. With this, again, is connected, like a second reflexion of that inward similitude, the conceit of two marvellously beautiful cups, also exactly like each other—children's cups, of wood, but adorned with gold and precious stones. These two cups, which by their resemblance help to bring the friends together at critical moments, were given to them by the Pope, when he baptized them at Rome, whether the parents had taken them for that purpose, in gratitude for their birth. They cross and recross very strangely in the narrative, serving the two heroes almost like living things, and with that well-known effect of a beautiful object, kept constantly before the eye in a story or poem, of keeping sensation well awake, and giving a certain air of refinement to all the scenes into which it enters.

That sense of fate, which hangs so much of the shaping of human life on trivial objects, like Othello's strawberry handkerchief, is thereby heightened, while witness is borne to the enjoyment of beautiful handiwork by primitive people, their simple wonder at it, so that they give it an oddly significant place among the factors of a human history

Amis and Amile, then, are true to their comradeship through all trials, and in the end it comes to pass that at a moment of great need Amis takes the place of Amile in a tournament for life or death "After this it happened that a leprosy fell upon Amis, so that his wife would not approach him, and wrought to strangle him. He departed, therefore, from his home, and at last prayed his servants to carry him to the house of Amile," and it is in what follows that the curious strength of the piece shows itself —

"His servants, willing to do as he commanded, carried him to the place where Amile was. and they began to sound their rattles before the court of Amile's house, as lepers are accustomed to do And when Amile heard the noise he commanded one of his servants to carry meat and bread to the sick man, and the cup which was given to him at Rome filled with good wine And when the servant had done as he was commanded, he returned and said, Sir, if I had not thy cup in my hand, I should believe that the cup which the sick man has was thine, for they are alike, the one to the other, in height and fashion And Amile said, Go quickly and bring him to me And when Amis stood before his comrade Amile demanded of him who he was, and how he had gotten that cup I am of Briquain le Chastel, answered Amis, and the cup was given to me by the Bishop of Rome, who baptized me And when Amile heard that, he knew

that he was his comrade Amis, who had delivered him from death, and won for him the daughter of the King of France to be his wife And straightway he fell upon him, and began weeping greatly, and kissed him And when his wife heard that, she ran out with her hair in disarray, weeping and distressed exceedingly, for she remembered that it was he who had slain the false Ardres. And thereupon they placed him in a fair bed, and said to him, Abide with us until God's will be accomplished in thee, for all we have is at thy service So he and the two servants abode with them

"And it came to pass one night, when Amis and Amile lay in one chamber without other companions, that God sent His angel Raphael to Amis, who said to him, Amis, art thou asleep? And he, supposing that Amile had called him, answered and said, I am not asleep, fair comrade And the angel said to him, Thou has answered well, for thou art the comrade of the heavenly citizens.—I am Raphael, the angel of our Lord, and am come to tell thee how thou mayest be healed, for thy prayers are heard Thou shalt bid Amile, thy comrade, that he slay his two children and wash thee in their blood, and so thy body shall be made whole And Amis said to him, Let not this thing be, that my comrade should become a murderer for my sake But the angel said, It is convenient that he do this And thereupon the angel departed

"And Amile also, as if in sleep, heard those words; and he awoke and said, Who is it, my comrade, that hath spoken with thee? And Amis answered, No man; only I have prayed to our Lord, as I am accustomed. And Amile said, Not so! but some one hath spoken with thee Then he arose and went to the door of the chamber; and finding it shut he said, Tell me, my brother, who it

was said those words to thee to-night. And Amis began to weep greatly, and told him that it was Raphael, the angel of the Lord, who had said to him, Amis, our Lord commands thee that thou bid Amile slay his two children, and wash thee in their blood, and so thou shalt be healed of thy leprosy. And Amile was greatly disturbed at those words, and said, I would have given to thee my man-servants and my maid-servants and all my goods, and thou feignest that an angel hath spoken to thee that I should slay my two children. And immediately Amis began to weep, and said, I know that I have spoken to thee a terrible thing, but constrained thereto; I pray thee cast me not away from the shelter of thy house. And Amile answered that what he had covenanted with him, that he would perform, unto the hour of his death. But I conjure thee, said he, by the faith which there is between me and thee, and by our comradeship, and by the baptism we received together at Rome, that thou tell me whether it was man or angel said that to thee. And Amis answered again, So truly as an angel hath spoken to me this night, so may God deliver me from my infirmity!

“Then Amile began to weep in secret, and thought within himself. If this man was ready to die before the king for me, shall I not for him slay my children? Shall I not keep faith with him who was faithful to me even unto death? And Amile tarried no longer, but departed to the chamber of his wife, and bade her go hear the Sacred Office. And he took a sword, and went to the bed where the children were lying, and found them asleep. And he lay down over them and began to weep bitterly and said, Hath any man yet heard of a father who of his own will slew his children? Alas, my children! I am no longer your father, but your cruel

murderer.

"And the children awoke at the tears of their father, which fell upon them; and they looked up into his face and began to laugh. And as they were of the age of about three years, he said, Your laughing will be turned into tears, for your innocent blood must now be shed, and therewith he cut off their heads. Then he laid them back in the bed, and put the heads upon the bodies, and covered them as though they slept and with the blood which he had taken he washed his comrade, and said, Lord Jesus Christ, who hast commanded men to keep faith on earth, and didst heal the leper by Thy word! cleanse now my comrade, for whose love I have shed the blood of my children

"Then Amis was cleansed of his leprosy. And Amile clothed his companion in his best robes, and as they went to the church to give thanks, the bells, by the will of God, rang of their own accord. And when the people of the city heard that, they ran together to see the marvel. And the wife of Amile, when she saw Amis and Amile coming, asked which of the twain was her husband, and said, I know well the vesture of them both, but I know not which of them is Amile. And Amile said to her, I am Amile, and my companion is Amis, who is healed of his sickness. And she was full of wonder, and desired to know in what manner he was healed. Give thanks to our Lord, answered Amile, but trouble not thyself as to the manner of the healing.

"Now neither the father nor the mother had yet entered where the children were, but the father sighed heavily, because they were dead, and the mother asked for them, that they might rejoice together, but Amile said, Dame! let the children sleep. And it was already the hour of Tierce. And going in alone to the children

to weep over them, he found them at play in the bed; only, in the place of the sword-cuts about their throats was as it were a thread of crimson. And he took them in his arms and carried them to his wife and said, Rejoice greatly, for thy children whom I had slain by the commandment of the angel are alive, and by their blood is Amis healed "

There, as I said, is the strength of the old French story For the Renaissance has not only the sweetness which it derives from the classical world, but also that curious strength of which there are great resources in the true middle age And as I have illustrated the early strength of the Renaissance by the story of Amis and Amile, a story which comes from the North, in which a certain racy Teutonic flavour is perceptible, so I shall illustrate that other element, its early sweetness, a languid excess of sweetness even, by another story printed in the same volume of the *Bibliothèque Elzevrienne*, and of about the same date, a story which comes characteristically, from the South, and connects itself with the literature of Provence

The central love-poetry of Provence, the poetry of the *Tenson* and the *Aubade*, of Bernard de Ventadour and Pierre Vidal, is poetry for the few, for the elect and peculiar people of the kingdom of sentiment But below this intenser poetry there was probably a wide range of literature, less serious and elevated, reaching, by lightness of form and comparative homeliness of interest, an audience which the concentrated passion of those higher lyrics left untouched This literature has long since perished, or lives only in later French or Italian versions One such version, the only representative of its species, M Fauriel thought he detected in the story of *Aucassin and Nicolette*, written in the French

of the latter half of the thirteenth century, and preserved in a unique manuscript, in the national library of Paris; and there were reasons which made him divine for it a still more ancient ancestry, traces in it of an Arabian origin, as in a leaf lost out of some early *Arabian Nights*.* The little book loses none of its interest through the criticism which finds in it only a traditional subject, handed on by one people to another, for after passing thus from hand to hand, its outline is still clear, its surface untarnished, and, like many other stories, books, literary and artistic conceptions of the middle age, it has come to have in this way a sort of personal history, almost as full of risk and adventure as that of its own heroes. The writer himself calls the piece a *cantefable*, a tale told in prose, but with its incidents and sentiment helped forward by songs, inserted at irregular intervals. In the junctions of the story itself there are signs of roughness and want of skill, which make one suspect that the prose was only put together to connect a series of songs—a series of songs so moving and attractive that people wished to heighten and dignify their effect by a regular framework or setting. Yet the songs themselves are of the simplest kind, not rhymed even, but only imperfectly assonant, stanzas of twenty or thirty lines apiece, all ending with a similar vowel sound. And here, as elsewhere in that

* Recently, *Aucassin and Nicolette* has been edited and translated into English, with much graceful scholarship, by Mr. F. W. Bourdillon. Still more recently we have had a translation—a poet's translation—from the ingenious and versatile pen of Mr. Andrew Lang. The reader should consult also the chapter on "The Out-door Poetry," in Vernon Lee's most interesting *Euphonia, being Studies of the Antique and Medieval in the Renaissance*, a work abounding in knowledge and insight on the subjects of which it treats.

early poetry, much of the interest lies in the spectacle of the formation of a new artistic sense. A novel art is arising, the music of rhymed poetry, and in the songs of Aucassin and Nicolette, which seem always on the point of passing into true rhyme, but which halt somehow, and can never quite take flight, you see people just growing aware of the elements of a new music in their possession, and anticipating how pleasant such music might become.

The piece was probably intended to be recited by a company of trained performers, many of whom, at least for the lesser parts, were probably children. The songs are introduced by the rubric, *Or se cante (ici on chante)*; and each division of prose by the rubric, *Or dient et contente et fabloient (ici on conte)*. The musical notes of a portion of the songs have been preserved, and some of the details are so descriptive that they suggested to M. Fauriel the notion that the words had been accompanied throughout by dramatic action. That mixture of simplicity and refinement which he was surprised to find in a composition of the thirteenth century, is shown sometimes in the turn given to some passing expression or remark, thus, "the Count de Garins was old and frail, his time was over"—*Li quens Garins de Beaucaire estoit vix et frales, si avoit son tans trespassee*. And then, all is so realised! One sees the ancient forest, with its disused roads grown deep with grass, and the place where seven roads meet—*u a forkent set chemin qui s'en vont par le pais*, we hear the light-hearted country people calling each other by their rustic names, and putting forward, as their spokesman, one among them who is more eloquent and ready than the rest—*li un qor plus fu enparles des autres*; for the little book has its burlesque element also, so that one

hears the faint, far-off laughter still. Rough as it is, the piece certainly possesses this high quality of poetry, that it aims at a purely artistic effect. Its subject is a great sorrow, yet it claims to be a thing of joy and refreshment, to be entertained not for its matter only, but chiefly for its manner, it is *cortois*, it tells us, *et bien assis*.

For the student of manners, and of the old French language and literature, it has much interest of a purely antiquarian order. To say of an ancient literary composition that it has an antiquarian interest, often means that it has no distinct æsthetic interest for the reader of to-day. Antiquarianism, by a purely historical effort, by putting its object in perspective, and setting the reader in a certain point of view, from which what gave pleasure to the past is pleasurable for him also, may often add greatly to the charm we receive from ancient literature. But the first condition of such aid must be a real, direct, æsthetic charm in the thing itself. Unless it has that charm, unless some purely artistic quality went to its original making, no merely antiquarian effort can ever give it an æsthetic value, or make it a proper subject of æsthetic criticism. This quality, wherever it exists, it is always pleasant to define, and discriminate from the sort of borrowed interest which an old play, or an old story, may very likely acquire through a true antiquarianism. The story of Aucassin and Nicolette has something of this quality. Aucassin, the only son of Count Garins of Beaucaire, is passionately in love with Nicolette, a beautiful girl of unknown parentage, bought of the Saracens, whom his father will not permit him to marry. The story turns on the adventures of these two lovers, until at the end of the piece their mutual fidelity is rewarded. These adventures are of the simplest

sort, adventures which seem to be chosen for the happy occasion they afford of keeping the eye of the fancy, perhaps the outward eye, fixed on pleasant objects, a garden, a ruined tower, the little hut of flowers which Nicolette constructs in the forest whither she escapes from her enemies, as a token to Aucassin that she has passed that way. All the charm of the piece is in its details, in a turn of peculiar lightness and grace given to the situations and traits of sentiment, especially in its quaint fragments of early French prose.

All through it one feels the influence of that faint air of overwrought delicacy, almost of wantonness which was so strong a characteristic of the poetry of the Troubadours. The Troubadours themselves were often men of great rank, they wrote for an exclusive audience, people of much leisure and great refinement, and they came to value a type of personal beauty which has in it but little of the influence of the open air and sunshine. There is a languid Eastern deliciousness in the very scenery of the story, the full-blown roses, the chamber painted in some mysterious manner where Nicolette is imprisoned, the odour of plucked grass and flowers. Nicolette herself well becomes this scenery, and is the best illustration of the quality I mean—the beautiful, weird, foreign girl, whom the shepherds take for a fay, who has the knowledge of simples, the healing and beautifying qualities of leaves and flowers, whose skilful touch heals Aucassin's sprained shoulder, so that he suddenly leaps from the ground; the mere sight of whose white flesh, as she passed the place where he lay, healed a pilgrim stricken with sore disease, so that he rose up, and returned to his own country. With this girl Aucassin is so deeply in love that he forgets all knightly duties. At last Nicolette is shut up to get her out of his way, and

perhaps the prettiest passage in the whole piece is the fragment of prose which describes her escape.

"Aucassin was put in prison, as you have heard, and Nicolette remained shut up in her chamber. It was summer-time, in the month of May, when the days are warm and long and clear, and the nights coy and serene

"One night Nicolette, lying on her bed, saw the moon shine clear through the little window, and heard the nightingale sing in the garden, and then came the memory of Aucassin, whom she so much loved. She thought of the Count Garins of Beaucaire, who mortally hated her, and, to be rid of her, might at any moment cause her to be burned or drowned. She perceived that the old woman who kept her company was asleep; she rose and put on the fairest gown she had; she took the bed-clothes and the towels, and knotted them together like a cord, as far as they would go. Then she tied the end to a pillar of the window, and let herself slip down quite softly into the garden, and passed straight across it, to reach the town

"Her hair was yellow in small curls, her smiling eyes blue-green, her face clear and feat, the little lips very red, the teeth small and white, and the daisies which she crushed in passing, holding her skirt high behind and before, looked dark against her feet, the girl was so white!

"She came to the garden-gate and opened it, and walked through the streets of Beaucaire, keeping on the dark side of the way to be out of the light of the moon, which shone quietly in the sky. She walked as fast as she could, until she came to the tower where Aucassin was. The tower was set about with pillars, here and there. She passed herself against one of the pillars,

wrapped herself closely in her mantle, and putting her face to a chink of the tower, which was old and ruined, she heard Aucassin crying bitterly within, and when she had listened awhile she began to speak "

But scattered up and down through this lighter matter, always tinged with humour and often passing into burlesque, which makes up the general substance of the piece, there are morsels of a different quality, touches of some intenser sentiment, coming it would seem from the profound and energetic spirit of the Provencal poetry itself, to which the inspiration of the book has been referred. Let me gather up these morsels of deeper colour, these expressions of the ideal intensity of love, the motive which really unites together the fragments of the little composition. Dante, the perfect flower of ideal love, has recorded how the tyranny of that "Lord of terrible aspect" became actually physical, blinding his senses, and suspending his bodily forces. In this, Dante is but the central expression and type of experiences known well enough to the initiated, in that passionate age. Aucassin represents this ideal intensity of passion—

*Aucassin, le brun, le blond,
Le gentil, le amoureux,—*

the slim, tall, debonair *dansellon*, as the singers call him, with his curled yellow hair, and eyes of *vivax*, who faints with love, as Dante fainted, who rides all day through the forest in search of Nicolette, while the thorns tear his flesh, so that one might have traced him by the blood upon the grass, and who weeps at eventide because he has not found her, who has the malady of his love, and neglects all knightly duties. Once he is induced to put

himself at the head of his people, that they, seeing him before them, might have more heart to defend themselves; then a song relates how the sweet, grave figure goes forth to battle, in dainty, tight-laced armour. It is the very image of the Provencal love-god, no longer a child, but grown to pensive youth, as Pierre Vidal met him, riding on a white horse, fair as the morning, his vestment embroidered with flowers. He rode on through the gates into the open plain beyond. But as he went, that great malady of his love came upon him. The bridle fell from his hands, and like one who sleeps walking, he was carried on into the midst of his enemies, and heard them talking together how they might most conveniently kill him.

One of the strongest characteristics of that outbreak of the reason and the imagination, of that assertion of the liberty of the heart, in the middle age, which I have termed a mediæval Renaissance, was its antinomianism, its spirit of rebellion and revolt against the moral and religious ideas of the time. In their search after the pleasures of the senses and the imagination, in their care for beauty, in their worship of the body, people were impelled beyond the bounds of the Christian ideal, and their love became sometimes a strange idolatry, a strange rival religion. It was the return of that ancient Venus, not dead, but only hidden for a time in the caves of the Venusberg, of those old pagan gods still going to and fro on the earth, under all sorts of disguises. And this element in the middle age, for the most part ignored by those writers who have treated it pre-eminently as the "Age of Faith"—this rebellious and antinomian element, the recognition of which has made the delineation of the middle age by the writers of the Romantic school in France, by Victor Hugo for instance in *Notre-Dame de*

Paris, so suggestive and exciting—is found alike in the history of Abelard and the legend of Tannhauser. More and more, as we come to mark changes and distinctions of temper in what is often in one all-embracing confusion called the middle age, that rebellion, that sinister claim for liberty of heart and thought, comes to the surface. The Albigensian movement, connected so strangely with the history of Provencal poetry, is deeply tinged with it. A touch of it makes the Franciscan order, with its poetry, its mysticism, its “illumination,” from the point of view of religious authority, justly suspect. It influences the thoughts of those obscure prophetic writers, like Joachim of Flora, strange dreamers in a world of flowery rhetoric of that third and final dispensation of a “spirit of freedom,” in which law shall have passed away. Of this spirit *Aucassin and Nicolette* contains perhaps the most famous expression: it is the answer Aucassin gives when he is threatened with the pains of hell, if he makes Nicolette his mistress. A creature wholly of affection and the senses, he sees on the way to paradise only a feeble and worn-out company of aged priests, “clinging day and night to the chapel altars,” barefoot or in patched sandals. With or even without Nicolette, “his sweet mistress whom he so much loves,” he, for his part, is ready to start on the way to hell, along with “the good scholars,” as he says, and the actors, and the fine horsemen dead in battle, and the men of fashion,* and “the fair courteous ladies who had two or three chevaliers apiece beside their own true lords,” all gay with music, in their gold, and silver, and beautiful

* *Parage*, peerage—which came to signify all that ambitious youth affected most on the outside of life, in that old world of the Troubadours, with whom this term is of frequent recurrence.

furs—"the vair and the grey"

But in the *House Beautiful* the saints too have their place; and the student of the Renaissance has this advantage over the student of the emancipation of the human mind in the Reformation, or the French Revolution, that in tracing the footsteps of humanity to higher levels, he is not beset at every turn by the inflexibilities and antagonisms of some well-recognised controversy, with rigidly defined opposites, exhausting the intelligence and limiting one's sympathies. The opposition of the professional defenders of a mere system to that more sincere and generous play of the forces of human mind and character, which I have noted as the secret of Abelard's struggle, is indeed always powerful. But the incompatibility with one another of souls really "fair" is not essential, and within the enchanted region of the Renaissance, one needs not be for ever on one's guard. Here there are no fixed parties, no exclusions—all breathes of that unity of culture in which "whatsoever things are comely" are reconciled, for the elevation and adorning of our spirits. And just in proportion as those who took part in the Renaissance become centrally representative of it, just so much the more is this condition realised in them. The wicked popes, and the loveless tyrants, who from time to time became its patrons, or mere speculators in its fortunes, lend themselves easily to disputations, and, from this side or that, the spirit of controversy lays just hold upon them. But the painter of the *Last Supper*, with his kindred, lives in a land where controversy has no breathing-place. They refuse to be classified. In the story of *Aucassin and Nicolette*, in the literature which it represents, the note of defiance, of the opposition of one system to another, is sometimes harsh. Let me conclude then with a morsel from *Amis*

and *Amile*, in which the harmony of human interests is still entire. For the story of the great traditional friendship, in which, as I said, the liberty of the heart makes itself felt, seems, as we have it, to have been written by a monk—*La vie des saints martyrs Amis et Amile*. It was not till the end of the seventeenth century that their names were finally excluded from the martyrology; and their story ends with this monkish miracle of earthly comradeship, more than faithful unto death:—

“For, as God had united them in their lives in one accord, so they were not divided in their death, falling together side by side, with a host of other brave men, in battle for King Charles at Mortara, so called from that great slaughter. And the bishops gave counsel to the king and queen that they should bury the dead, and build a church in that place, and their counsel pleased the king greatly. And there were built two churches, the one by commandment of the king in honour of Saint Oseige, and the other by commandment of the queen in honour of Saint Peter.

“And the king caused the two chests of stone to be brought in which the bodies of Amis and Amile lay; and Amile was carried to the church of Saint Peter, and Amis to the church of Saint Oseige, and the other corpses were buried, some in one place and some in the other. But lo! next morning, the body of Amile in his coffin was found lying in the church of Saint Oseige, beside the coffin of Amis his comrade. Behold then this wondrous amity, which by death could not be dissevered!

“This miracle God did, who gave to His disciples power to remove mountains. And by reason of this miracle the king and queen remained in that place for a space of thirty days, and performed the offices of the dead who were slain, and honoured the said churches

with great gifts. And the bishop ordained many clerks to serve in the church of Saint Osiege, and commanded them that they should guard duly, with great devotion, the bodies of the two companions, Amis and Amile "

WALTER PATER

1839—1894

Walter Horatio Pater, essayist and critic, was born in London and educated at Canterbury and Oxford. After touring in Germany and Italy he acted for a time as a tutor at Oxford and then settled down to a retired literary life. Among his works are "Studies in the History of the Renaissance" (1873), from which the present essay is taken, "Marius the Epicurean" (1885), a philosophical romance, "Imaginary Portraits" (1887), "Appreciations" (1889), containing a famous essay on Style; "Plato and Platonism" (1893), and "Greek Studies" (1895). In all his writings Pater's aim is to show how the man of culture may make the most of life, especially through the pleasure obtained from literature and art. Art was the dominating influence in his own intellectual life. His philosophy was a form of Paganism, tinged with Christian sympathies. His prose style is unique. His biographer, Mr. Benson, says "The essence of his attempt was to produce prose that had never before been contemplated in English, full of colour and melody, serious, exquisite, ornate. His object was that every sentence should be weighted, charged with music, haunted with echoes, that it should charm and suggest, rather than convince or state." No one has ever equalled Pater in the building up of the prose-paragraph.

In the present essay he deals with the Renaissance, this term is generally applied to the period in the 15th century when there was a revival in Western Europe of the study of the ancient arts and literature of Greece and Rome. This period marks the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times. But Pater contends that an earlier or medieval Renaissance in France began at the end of the 12th century. As evidence of this he discusses two early French romances, "The Friendship of Amis and Amile," and "Aucassin and Nicolette." The former story was extraordinarily popular in the Middle Ages, being found in every

language and in various forms, prose and verse, narrative and drama. The latter is generally regarded as the most beautiful story of the Middle Ages

TWO EARLY FRENCH STORIES

- 81 **St. Francis**—founder of the Franciscan order of monks, was born at Assisi in Italy in 1182
Boccaccio—author of the collection of 100 Italian tales called the *Decameron* (1313—1375)
fabliaux—old French tales in verse
Dante—the greatest of Italian writers (1265—1321), author of 'The Divine Comedy,' a poem of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven
- 82 **Pointed architecture**—Gothic style, with sharply-pointed arches
Provence—an old maritime province in the south of France; its tongue was Provençal
Jean Cousin—a French sculptor of the sixteenth century
Germain Pilon—a French sculptor (1535—1590)
- 83 **Abelard**—the keenest thinker and boldest theologian of the twelfth century
Tannhauser—a German knight who, after a licentious career, confessed his sins to Pope Urban. In 1845 Wagner made the story the subject of an operatic spectacle
Notre-Dame—the grandest church in Paris. It stands in a section of the city here called "The Island"
- 84 **M. de Remusat**—a French journalist and politician (1797—1875), who wrote a life of Abelard
Trouveres—medieval poets or minstrels of Northern France
"letters"—the correspondence between Abelard and Heloise, after she had become a nun
St Genevieve—the patroness of Paris (424—512).
Michelet—a French historian (1789—1874)
Arnold—a pupil of Abelard, afterwards a monk whose preaching to the people of Brescia in Italy offended the

Pope, he was banished but tried to foment rebellion and establish a republic. He was hanged in 1155.

Latin Quarter—that part of Paris in which the chief educational institutions were located.

- 85 **Rosamond**—Jane Clifford, beloved by Henry II of England, who kept her concealed at Woodstock (see Scott's novel *Woodstock*). After her murder she was buried in a convent at Godstow.
- 86 **Bibliothèque Elzevirienne**—the Elzevir Library (1592–1681) of beautiful editions of Latin, French, and Italian classics. The Elzevir family of printers belonged to Holland.

Li Amiteiz—the friendship. Amis and Amile were two knights, born on the same day and marvellously alike. They did not meet until both were knighted, they both served Charles the Great (Charlemagne).

- 87 **Palamon and Arcite**—two young Theban knights whose story is told in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales".
- eyen**—eyes, **bleynte**—started back, **stongen**—stung.
- Doppelganger**—a double or counterpart, one's other self.
- Dioscuri**—the Greek brothers, Castor and Pollux, fabled to have been placed among the stars as the constellation Gemini or the Twins.

- 89 **Raphael**—one of the Archangels.

- 90 **Sacred Office**—a form of service in the Roman Catholic Church.

- 91 **Tierce**—the church service appointed for the third hour of the day.

- 92 **Tenson**—a poetical love-plaint, a form of contest in verse between troubadours or minstrels.

Aubade—a morning serenade, or musical announcement of dawn.

M Fauriel—a French scholar (1772–1844) who wrote a history of Provençal poetry.

- 93 **cantefable**—a French prose tale, interspersed with songs.

- 94 **rubric**—directions for the performance.

Or se cante—now they sing (here they sing).

- Or dient*, etc—now they speak and narrate and tell a tale
95. *cortois*, etc—polite, and well arranged.
- 97 *Aucassin, li biax*, etc—Aucassin, the beautiful, the fair-haired, the graceful, the loving
dansellon—little dancer
viar—of a bluish-grey colour
- 98 **Pierre Vidal**—a French sculptor (1831—92), famous for animal figures
antinomianism—revolt against the moral law
Venusberg—a legendary mountain of sensual pleasures, where Tannhauser had lived and where he finally disappeared
Victor Hugo—the greatest French poet of the nineteenth century (1802—85), author of a historical romance *Notre Dame de Paris*
100. **Albigensian movement**—The Albigenses, named from Albi, a town in the south of France, were heretics against whom the Pope declared a crusade or holy war. Early in the thirteenth century they were extirpated with horrible cruelty. This brought about the end of the native culture and literature of Provence.
101. **Last Supper**—a famous painting of Christ's last supper with his disciples, it is the work of Leonardo de Vinci, Italian painter, sculptor, and architect (1452—1519)
- 102 **King Charles**—Charlemagne, Roman Emperor (742—814)
Mortara—a town of Lombardy, in N. Italy

ÆS TRIPLEX

R. L. STEVENSON

The changes wrought by death are in themselves so sharp and final, and so terrible and melancholy in their consequences, that the thing stands alone in man's experience, and has no parallel upon earth. It outdoes all other accidents because it is the last of them. Sometimes it leaps suddenly upon its victims, like a Thug; sometimes it lays a regular siege and creeps upon their citadel during a score of years. And when the business is done, there is sore havoc made in other people's lives, and a pin knocked out by which many subsidiary friendships hung together. There are empty chairs, solitary walks, and single beds at night. Again, in taking away our friends, death does not take them away utterly, but leaves behind a mocking, tragical, and soon intolerable residue, which must be hurriedly concealed. Hence a whole chapter of sights and customs striking to the mind, from the pyramids of Egypt to the gibbets and dule trees of medieval Europe. The poorest persons have a bit of pageant going towards the tomb, memorial stones are set up over the least memorable, and in order to preserve some show of respect for what remains of our old loves and friendships, we must accompany it with much grimly ludicrous ceremonial, and the hired undertaker parades before the door. All this, and much more of the same sort, accompanied by the eloquence of poets, has gone a great way to put humanity in error, nay, in many philosophies the error has been embodied and laid down with every circumstance of logic; although in real life the bustle and swiftness, in leaving people little time to think, have not left them time enough to go dangerously

wrong in practice

As a matter of fact, although few things are spoken of with more fearful whisperings than this prospect of death, few have less influence on conduct under healthy circumstances. We have all heard of cities in South America built upon the side of fiery mountain, and how, even in this tremendous neighbourhood, the inhabitants are not a jot more impressed by the solemnity of mortal conditions than if they were delving gardens in the greenest corner of England. There are serenades and suppers and much gallantry among the myrtles overhead, and meanwhile the foundation shudders underfoot, the bowels of the mountain growl, and at any moment living ruin may leap sky-high into the moonlight, and tumble man and his merry-making in the dust. In the eyes of very young people, and very dull old ones, there is something indescribably reckless and desperate in such a picture. It seems not credible that respectable married people, with umbrellas, should find appetite for a bit of supper within quite a long distance of a fiery mountain, ordinary life begins to smell of high-handed debauch when it is carried on so close to a catastrophe, and even cheese and salad, it seems, could hardly be relished in such circumstances without something like a defiance of the Creator. It should be a place for nobody but hermits dwelling in prayer and maceration, or mere born-devils drowning care in a perpetual carouse.

And yet, when one comes to think upon it calmly, the situation of these South American citizens forms only a very pale figure for the state of ordinary mankind. This world itself, travelling blindly and swiftly in overcrowded space, among a million other worlds travelling blindly and swiftly in contrary directions, may very well come by a knock that would set it into explosion like a penny

squib. And what, pathologically looked at, is the human body with all its organs, but a mere bagful of petards? The least of these is as dangerous to the whole economy as the ship's powder-magazine to the ship, and with every breath we breathe, and every meal we eat, we are putting one or more of them in peril. If we clung as devotedly as some philosophers pretend we do to the abstract idea of life, or were half as frightened as they make out we are, for the subversive accident that ends it all, the trumpets might sound by the hour and no one would follow them into battle—the blue-peter might fly at the truck, but who would climb into a sea-going ship? Think (if these philosophers were right) with what a preparation of spirit we should affront the daily peril of the dinner-table, a deadlier spot than any battlefield in history, where the far greater proportion of our ancestors have miserably left their bones! What woman would ever be lured into marriage, so much more dangerous than the wildest sea? And what would it be to grow old? For, after a certain distance, every step we take in life we find the ice growing thinner below our feet, and all around us and behind us we see our contemporaries going through. By the time a man gets well into the seventies, his continued existence is a mere miracle, and when he lays his old bones in bed for the night, there is an overwhelming probability that he will never see the day. Do the old men mind it, as a matter of fact? Why, no. They were never merrier, they have their grog at night, and tell the raciest stories, they hear of the death of people about their own age, or even younger, not as if it was a grisly warning, but with a simple childlike pleasure at having outlived some one else, and when a draught might puff them out like a guttering candle, or a bit of a stumble shatter them like so much glass, their old hearts keep

sound and unaffrighted, and they go on bubbling with laughter, through years of man's age compared to which the valley at Balaklava was as safe and peaceful as a village cricket-green on Sunday. It may fairly be questioned (if we look to the peril only) whether it was a much more daring feat for Curtius to plunge into the gulf than for any old gentleman of ninety to doff his clothes and clamber into bed.

Indeed, it is a memorable subject for consideration, with what unconcern and gaiety mankind pricks along the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The whole way is one wilderness of snares, and the end of it, for those who fear the last pinch, is irrevocable ruin. And yet we go spinning through it all, like a party for the Derby. Perhaps the reader remembers one of the humorous devices of the deified Caligula—how he encouraged a vast concourse of holiday-makers on to his bridge over Baïæ bay; and when they were in the height of their enjoyment, turned loose the Prætorian guards among the company, and had them tossed into the sea. This is no bad miniature of the dealings of nature with the transitory race of man. Only, what a chequered picnic we have of it, even while it lasts and into what great waters, not to be crossed by any swimmer, God's pale Prætorian throws us over in the end!

We live the time that a match flickers, we pop the cork of a ginger-beer bottle, and the earthquake swallows us on the instant. Is it not odd, is it not incongruous, is it not, in the highest sense of human speech, incredible that we should think so highly of the ginger-beer, and regard so little the devouring earthquake? The love of Life and the fear of Death are two famous phrases that grow harder to understand the more we think about them. It is a well-known fact that an immense proportion of

boat accidents would never happen if people held the sheet in their hands instead of making it fast, and yet, unless it be some martinet of a professional mariner or some landsman with shattered nerves, every one of God's creatures makes it fast. A strange instance of man's unconcern and brazen boldness in the face of death!

We confound ourselves with metaphysical phrases, which we import into daily talk with noble inappropriateness. We have no idea of what death is, apart from its circumstances and some of its consequences to others; and although we have some experience of living, there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical guess at the meaning of the word *life*. All literature, from Job and Omar Khayam to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the definition of life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages, and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes without end, philosophy has the honour of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman, but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man, but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word *life* in its dozen senses until

we are weary of tricking; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth, but one fact remains true throughout—that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly preoccupied about its conservation; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living. Into the views of the least careful there will enter some degree of providence; no man's eyes are fixed entirely on the passing hour, but although we have some anticipation of good health, good weather, wine, active employment, love, and self-approval, the sum of these anticipations does not amount to anything like a general view of life's possibilities and issues, nor are those who cherish them most vividly, at all the most scrupulous of their personal safety. To be deeply interested in the accidents of our existence, to enjoy keenly the mixed texture of human experience, rather leads a man to disregard precautions, and risk his neck against a straw. For surely the love of living is stronger in an Alpine climber roping over a peril or a hunter riding merrily at a stiff fence, than in a creature who lives upon a diet and walks a measured distance in the interest of his constitution.

There is a great deal of very vile nonsense talked upon both sides of the matter: tearing divines reducing life to the dimensions of a mere funeral procession, so short as to be hardly decent; and melancholy unbelievers yearning for the tomb as if it were a world too far away. Both sides must feel a little ashamed of their performances now and again when they draw in their chairs to dinner. Indeed, a good meal and a bottle of wine is an answer to most standard works upon the question. When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation. Death may be knocking at the door, like the Commander's statue; we have something else in hand,

thank God, and let him knock. Passing bells are ringing all the world over. All the world over, and every hour, some one is parting company with all his aches and ecstasies. For us also the trap is laid. But we are so fond of life that we have no leisure to entertain the terror of death. It is a honeymoon with us all through, and none of the longest. Small blame to us if we give our whole hearts to this glowing bride of ours, to the appetites, to honour, to the hungry curiosity of the mind, to the pleasure of the eyes in nature, and the pride of our own nimble bodies.

We all of us appreciate the sensations, but as for caring about the Permanence of the Possibility, a man's head is generally very bald, and his senses very dull, before he comes to that. Whether we regard life as a lane leading to a dead wall—a mere bag's end, as the French say—or whether we think of it as a vestibule or gymnasium, where we wait our turn and prepare our faculties for some more noble destiny, whether we thunder in a pulpit, or pule in little atheistic poetry-books, about its vanity and brevity, whether we look justly for years of health and vigour, or are about to mount into a bath-chair, as a step towards the hearse, in each and all of these views and situations there is but one conclusion possible: that a man should stop his ears against paralysing terror, and run the race that is set before him with a single mind. No one surely could have recoiled with more heartache and terror from the thought of death than our respected lexicographer, and yet we know how little it affected his conduct, how wisely and boldly he walked and in what a fresh and lively vein he spoke of life. Already an old man, he ventured on his Highland tour, and his heart, bound with triple brass, did not recoil before twenty seven individual cups of tea. As

courage and intelligence are the two qualities best worth a good man's cultivation, so it is the first part of intelligence to recognise our precarious estate in life, and the first part of courage to be not at all abashed before the fact. A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well armoured for this world

And not only well armoured for himself, but a good friend and a good citizen to boot. We do not go to cowards for tender dealing, there is nothing so cruel as panic, the man who has least fear for his own carcase, has most time to consider others. That eminent chemist who took his walk abroad in tin shoes, and subsisted wholly upon tepid milk, had all his work cut out for him in considerable dealings with his own digestion. So soon as prudence has begun to grow up in the brain, like a dismal fungus, it finds its first expression in a paralysis of generous acts. The victim begins to shrink spiritually; he develops a fancy for parlours with a regulated temperature, and takes morality on the principle of tin shoes and tepid milk. The care of one important body or soul becomes so engrossing, that all the noises of the outer world begin to come thin and faint into the parlour with the regulated temperature, and the tin shoes go equally forward over blood and rain. To be overwise is to ossify, and the scruple monger ends by standing stockstill. Now the man who has his heart on his sleeve, and a good whirling weathercock of a brain, who reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded, makes a very different acquaintance of the world, keeps all his pulses going true and fast, and gathers impetus as he runs, if he be running towards anything better than wildfire, he may shoot up and become a constellation in

the end. Lord look after his health, Lord have a care for his soul, says he, and he has at the key of the position, and swashes through incongruity and peril towards his aim. Death is on all sides of him with pointed batteries as he is on all sides of all of us, unfortunate surprises gird him round, wry-mouthed friends and relations hold up their hands in quite a little elegiacal synod about his path and what cares he for all this? Being a true lover of living, a fellow with something pushing and spontaneous in his inside, he must, like any other soldier, in any other stirring, deadly warfare, push on at his best pace until he touch the goal. "A peerage or Westminster Abbey!" cried Nelson in his bright, boyish, heroic manner. These are great incentives, nor for any of these, but for the plain satisfaction of living, of being about their business in some sort or other, do the brave, serviceable men of every nation tread down the nettle danger, and pass flyingly over all the stumbling-blocks of prudence. Think of the heroism of Johnson, think of that superb indifference to mortal limitation that set him upon his dictionary and carried him through triumphantly until the end! Who, if he were wisely considerate of things at large, would ever embark upon any work much more considerable than a halfpenny postcard? Who would project a serial novel, after Thackeray and Dickens had each fallen in mid-course? Who would find heart enough to begin to live, if he dallied with the consideration of death?

And after all, what sorry and pitiful quibbling all this is! To forego all the issues of living in a parlour with a regulated temperature—as if that were not to die a hundred times over, and for ten years at a stretch! As if it were not to die in one's own lifetime, and without even the sad immunities of death! As if it were not to

die, and yet be the patient spectators of our own pitiable change! The Permanent Possibility is preserved, but the sensations carefully held at arm's length, as if one kept a photographic plate in a dark chamber. It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live and be done with it than to die daily in the sick-room. By all means begin your folio, even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely ending. All who have meant good work with their whole hearts, have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in midcareer, laying out vast projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced; is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas? When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtake the man, this is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a tiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other

side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land.

R L STEVENSON

1850—1894

Robert Louis Stevenson, essayist, novelist, and poet, was born at Edinburgh, his father was a civil engineer. Having no taste for his father's profession, he studied law and was called to the Scottish Bar. But he soon abandoned the legal profession and took to literature and travel, his constitutional tendency to lung-disease drove him to seek health in Switzerland, California, and other places. He finally settled in Samoa, an island in the South Seas (1889), where he won the affection of the islanders, who called him *Tusitala*, "the teller of tales."

His delight in stories of adventure is seen in "Treasure Island" (1883), and in several historical novels, "Kidnapped," with its sequel "Catriona," "the Black Arrow," and "the Master of Ballantrae." "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" is a highly finished psychological romance. Among his collections of essays are "Virginibus Puerisque" (For Young Men and Women) from which the present selection has been taken, and "Familiar Studies of Men and Books." The essays reveal a courageous and attractive personality, a lover of nature and of books, and an acute and humorous observer of men and things. His vocabulary is worthy of careful study, for Stevenson is an artist in his felicitous choice of words. His best known collection of poems is "A Child's Garden of Verses" (1885).

ÆS TRIPLEX

The Latin title of this essay, meaning "Triple Brass," is taken from the Roman poet Horace's Odes, book I, iii. "His heart was mailed in oak and triple brass who first ventured his boat upon the sea." The essay is really a series of reflections upon Death and how to meet it.

113. Thug—in India *thag*, an assassin. Thaggery in India was

suppressed about 1825.

- 113 **gibbets and dule trees**—gallows and gibbets; 'dule' (pron-
dool) is a Scottish form of 'dole'=woe
- 114 **maceration**—mortification or self-denial of bodily appetite
by fasting, etc
- 115. **blue-peter**—a blue flag with a white square in the centre,
hoisted by a ship about to sail
- 115 **truck**—the very top of a ship's mast.
- 116 **Balaklava**—in the Crimea, the scene of the famous charge
of the Six Hundred (1854)
- 116 **Curtius**—the Roman knight who plunged into a gulf that
had opened in the Forum or public square of Rome. An
oracle had declared that the gulf would not close until
the most valuable thing in Rome had been cast into it.
The gulf immediately closed upon the devoted knight.
- 116 **the Derby**—famous English horse-races held annually at
Fpsom in Surrey
- 116 **Caligula**—a Roman Emperor (A D 37—41) who declared
himself a god, and was guilty of the most atrocious
outrages
- 116 **Baiae**—an Italian coast town near Naples
- 116 **Praetorian guards**—the bodyguard of a Roman general or
emperor "God's pale Praetorian" is the Angel of
Death
- 117 **sheet**—rope fastened to the corner of a sail
- 117 **Job**—one of the books of the Old Testament
- 117 **Omar Khayam**—the Persian author of the Rubaiyat
- 117 **Carlyle**—English historian (1795—1881)
- 117 **Whitman**—American poet (1819—1892)
- 117. **Permanent Possibility**, etc—the philosopher John Stuart
Mill, following Hume, held that Substance is known to
us only as a permanent possibility of sensations (Matter)
or of feelings (the Self) Stevenson misapplies the
phrase to Life, it refers to Matter
- 118 **tearing**—violent, as in "a tearing rage"
- 118 **Commander's statue**—in Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni"
(1787) the ghost of a commandant whom the wicked

- Don had slain came with a legion of foul fiends and carried him off to the devouring gulf
119. **bag's end**—French *cul de sac*, a blind alley, a street closed at one end
- 119 **lexicographer**—Dr Samuel Johnson (1709—1783), compiler of a great English Dictionary In 1773 he made a journey to the Scottish Highlands and Islands
- 121 **has at the key**—attacks the important point. Note the idiom 'to have at,' *etc.*, to make an attack upon
- 121 **pointed batteries**—guns laid ready to fire
121. **wry-mouthed**—a Scottish expression for a precise or affectedly modest demeanour, marked by the compression of the lips
- 121 **A peerage**, etc.—implies reward by a title or by a magnificent funeral
- 121 **Thackeray and Dickens**—these novelists published their works in monthly parts, and both left unfinished novels. Thackeray died in 1862 whilst engaged on "Denis Duval," Dickens died suddenly in 1870, leaving incomplete "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" Stevenson himself left unfinished novels
- 122 **whom the gods love**—"He whom the gods love dies young" is quoted from Menander (B.C. 342—291), a Greek dramatist
- 122 **hot-fit**—fever, crisis
- 123 **trailing clouds**—see Wordsworth's Ode on "Intimations of Immortality in Early Childhood"
- 123 **happy-starred**—fortunate, born under a lucky star.

THE COLOUR OF LIFE

ALICE MEYNELL

Red has been praised for its nobility as the colour of life. But the true colour of life is not red. Red is the colour of violence, or of life broken open, edited, and published. Or if red is indeed the colour of life, it is so only on condition that it is not seen. Once fully visible, red is the colour of life violated, and in the act of betrayal and of waste. Red is the secret of life, and not the manifestation thereof. It is one of the things the value of which is secrecy, one of the talents that are to be hidden in a napkin. The true colour of life is the colour of the body, the colour of the covered red, the implicit and not explicit red of the living heart and the pulses. It is the modest colour of the unpublished blood.

So bright, so light, so soft, so mingled, the gentle colour of life is outdone by all the colours of the world. Its very beauty is that it is white, but less white than milk; brown, but less brown than earth; red, but less red than sunset or dawn. It is lucid, but less lucid than the colour of lilies. It has the hint of gold that is in all fine colour, but in our latitudes the hint is almost elusive. Under Sicilian skies, indeed, it is deeper than old ivory, but under the misty blue of the English zenith, and the warm gray of the London horizon, it is as delicately flushed as the paler wild roses, out to their utmost, flat as stars, in the hedges of the end of June.

For months together London does not see the colour of life in any mass. The human face does not give

much of it, what with features, and beards, and the shadow of the top-hat and *chapeau melon* of man, and of the veils of woman. Besides, the colour of the face is subject to a thousand injuries and accidents. The popular face of the Londoner has soon lost its gold, its white, and the delicacy of its red and brown. We miss little beauty by the fact that it is never seen freely in great numbers out-of-doors. You get it in some quantity when all the heads of a great indoor meeting are turned at once upon a speaker, but it is only in perfection, in the open air. "Clothed with the sun," whether the sunshine be golden and direct, or dazzlingly diffused in gray.

The little figure of the London boy it is that has restored to the landscape the human colour of life. He is allowed to come out of all his ignominies, and to take the late colour of the midsummer north-west evening, on the borders of the Serpentine. At the stroke of eight he sheds the slough of nameless colours—all allied to the hues of dust, soot, and fog, which are the colours the world has chosen for the clothing of its boys—and he makes, in his hundreds, a bright and delicate flush between the gray-blue water and the gray-blue sky. Clothed now with the sun, he is crowned by-and-by with twelve stars as he goes to bathe, and the reflection of an early moon is under his feet.

So little stands between a gamin and all the dignities of Nature. They are so quickly restored. There seems to be nothing to do, but only a little thing to undo. It is like the art of Eleonora Duse. The last and most finished action of her intellect, passion, and knowledge was, as it were, the flicking away of some insignificant thing mistaken for art by other actors, some little obstacle to the way and liberty of Nature.

All the squalor is gone in a moment, kicked off with the second boot, and the child goes shouting to complete the landscape with the lacking colour of life. You are inclined to wonder that, even undressed, he still shouts with a Cockney accent. You half expect pure vowels and elastic syllables from his restoration, his spring, his slenderness, his brightness, and his glow. Old ivory and wild rose in the deepening midsummer sun, he gives his colours to his world again.

It is easy to replace man, and it will take no great time, when Nature has lapsed, to replace Nature. It is always to do, by the happily easy way of doing nothing. The grass is always ready to grow in the streets—and no streets could ask for a more charming finish than your green grass. The gasometer even must fall to pieces unless it is renewed, but the grass renews itself. There is nothing so remediable as the work of modern man—"a thought which is also," as Mr Pecksniff said, "very soothing." And by remediable I mean, of course, destructible. As the bathing child shuffles off his garments—there are few, and one brace suffices him—so the land might always, in reasonable time, shuffle off its yellow brick and purple slate, and all the things that collect about railway stations. A single night almost clears the air of London.

But if the colour of life looks so well in the rather sham scenery of Hyde Park, it looks brilliant and grave indeed on a real sea-coast. To have once seen it there should be enough to make a colourist. O memorable little picture! The sun was gaining colour as it neared setting, and it set not over the sea, but over the land. The sea had the dark and rather stern, but not cold, blue of that aspect—the dark and not the opal tints. The sky was also deep. Everything was very definite, without

mystery, and exceedingly simple. The most luminous thing was the shining white because it was a little golden and a little rosy in the sunshine. It was still the whitest thing imaginable. And the next most luminous thing was the little unclad child, also invested with the sun and the colour of life.

In the case of women, it is of the living and unpublished blood that the violent world has professed to be delicate and ashamed. See the curious history of the political rights of woman under the Revolution. On the scaffold she enjoyed an ungrudged share in the fortunes of party. Political life might be denied her, but that seems a trifle when you consider how generously she was permitted political death. She was to spin and cook for her citizen in the obscurity of her living hours; but to the hour of her death was granted a part in the largest interests, social, national, international. The blood wherewith she should, according to Robespierre, have blushed to be seen or heard in the tribune, was exposed in the public sight unsheltered by her veins.

Against this there was no modesty. Of all privacies, the last and the innermost—the privacy of death—was never allowed to put obstacles in the way of public action for a public cause. Women might be, and were, duly silenced when, by the mouth of Olympe de Gouges, they claimed a “right to concur in the choice of representatives for the formation of the laws,” but in her person, too, they were liberally allowed to bear political responsibility to the Republic. Olympe de Gouges was guillotined. Robespierre thus made her public and complete amends.

HAVE PATIENCE, LITTLE SAINT

ALICE MEYNELL

Some considerable time must have gone by since any kind of courtesy ceased, in England, to be held necessary in the course of communication with a beggar. Feeling may be humane, and the interior act most gentle; there may be a tacit apology, and a profound misgiving unexpressed, a reluctance not only to refuse but to be arbiter, a dislike of the office, a regret, whether for the unequal distribution of social luck or for a purse left at home, equally sincere, howbeit custom exacts no word or sign, nothing whatever of intercourse. If a dog or a cat accosts you, or a calf in a field comes close to you with a candid infant face and breathing nostrils of investigation, or if any kind of animal comes to you on some obscure impulse of friendly approach, you acknowledge it. But the beggar to whom you give nothing expects no answer to a question, no recognition of his presence, not so much as the turn of your eyelid in his direction, and never a word to excuse you.

Nor does this blank behaviour seem savage to those who are used to nothing else. Yet it is somewhat more inhuman to refuse an answer to the beggar's remark than to leave a shop without "Good morning." When complaint is made of the modern social manner—that it has no merit but what is negative, and that it is apt even to abstain from courtesy with more lack of grace than the abstinence absolutely requires—the habit of manners towards beggars is probably not so much as thought of. To the simply human eye, however, the

prevalent manner towards beggars is a striking thing; it is significant of so much.

Obviously it is not easy to reply to begging except by the intelligible act of giving. We have not the ingenuous simplicity that marks the caste answering more or less to that of Vere de Vere, in Italy, for example. An elderly Italian lady on her slow way from her own ancient palazzo to the village, and accustomed to meet, empty-handed, a certain number of beggars, answers them by a retort which would be, literally translated, "Excuse me, dear, I, too, am a poor devil," and the last word she naturally puts into the feminine.

Moreover, the sentence is spoken in all the familiarity of the local dialect—a dialect that puts any two people at once upon equal terms as nothing else can do it. Would it were possible to present the phrase to English readers in all its own helpless good humour. The excellent woman who uses it is practising no eccentricity thereby, and raises no smile. It is only in another climate, and amid other manners, that one cannot recall it without a smile. To a mind having a lively sense of contrast it is not a little pleasant to imagine an elderly lady of corresponding station in England replying so to importunities for alms, albeit we have nothing answering to the good fellowship of a broad patois used currently by rich and poor, and yet slightly grotesque in the case of all speakers—a dialect in which, for example, no sermon is ever preached, and in which no book is ever printed, except for fun, a dialect "familiar, but by no means vulgar." Besides, even if our Englishwoman could by any possibility bring herself to say to a mendicant, "Excuse me, dear, I, too, am a poor devil," she would still not have the opportunity of putting the last word punctually into the feminine, which does so complete

the character of the sentence

The phrase at the head of this paper is the far more graceful phrase of excuse customary in the courteous manners of Portugal. And everywhere in the South, where an almost well-dressed old woman, who suddenly begins to beg from you when you least expected it, calls you "my daughter," you can hardly reply without kindness. Where the tourist is thoroughly well-known, doubtless the company of beggars are used to savage manners in the rich, but about the byways and remoter places there must still be some dismay at the anger, the silence, the indignation, and the inexpensive haughtiness wherewith the opportunity of almsgiving is received by travellers.

In nothing do we show how far the West is from the East so emphatically as we show it by our lofty ways towards those who so manifestly put themselves at our feet. It is certainly not pleasant to see them there, but silence or a storm of impersonal protest—a protest that appeals vaguely less to the beggar than to some not impossible police—does not seem the most appropriate manner of rebuking them. We have, it may be, a scruple on the point of human dignity, compromised by the entreaty and the thanks of the mendicant, but we have a strange way of vindicating that dignity when we refuse to man, woman or child the recognition of a simply human word. Nay, our offence is much the greater of the two. It is not merely a rough and contemptuous intercourse, it is the refusal of intercourse—the last outrage. How do we propose to redress those conditions of life that annoy us when a brother whines, if we deny the presence, the voice, and the being of this brother, and if, because fortune has refused him money, we refuse him existence.

We take the matter too seriously, or not seriously enough, to hold it in the indifference of the wise. "Have patience, little saint," is a phrase that might teach us the cheerful way to endure our own unintelligible fortunes in the midst, say, of the population of a hill-village among the most barren of the Maritime Alps, where huts of stone stand among the stones of an unclothed earth, and there is no sign of daily bread. The people, albeit unused to travellers, yet know by instinct what to do, and beg without the delay of a moment as soon as they see your unwonted figure. Let it be taken for granted that you give all you can, some form of refusal becomes necessary at least, and the gentlest—it is worth while to remember—is the most effectual. An indignant tourist, one who to the portent of a puggaree which, perhaps, he wears on a gray day, adds that of ungovernable rage, is so wild a visitor that no attempt at all is made to understand him, and the beggars beg dismayed but unalarmed, uninterruptedly, without a pause or a conjecture. They beg by rote, thinking of something else, as occasion arises, and all indifferent to the violence of the rich.

It is the merry beggar who has so lamentably disappeared. If a beggar is still merry anywhere, he hides away what it would so cheer and comfort us to see, he practises not merely the conventional seeming, which is hardly intended to convince, but a more subtle and dramatic kind of semblance, of no good influence upon the morals of the road. He no longer trusts the world with a sight of his gaiety. He is not a whole-hearted mendicant, and no longer keeps that liberty of unstable balance where an unattached creature can go in a new direction with a new wind. The merry beggar was the only adventurer free to yield to the lighter touches of

chance, the touches that a habit of resistance has made imperceptible to the seated and stable social world.

The visible flitting figure of the unfettered madman sprinkled our literature with mad songs, and even one or two poets of to-day have, by tradition, written them; but that wild source of inspiration has been stopped; it has been built over, lapped and locked, imprisoned, led underground. The light melancholy and the wind-blown joys of the song of the distraught which the poets were once ingenious to capture, have ceased to sound one note of liberty in the world's ears. But it seems that the grosser and saner freedom of the happy beggar is still the subject of a Spanish song.

The song is gay, not defiant, it is not an outlaw's or a robber's, it is not a song of violence or fear. It is the random trolling note of a man who owes his liberty to no disorder, failure, or ill-fortune, but takes it by choice from the voluntary world, enjoys it at the hand of unreluctant charity, who twists the world with its own choice of bonds, but has not broken his own by force. It seems, therefore, the song of an indomitable liberty of movement, light enough for the puffs of a zephyr chance.

A POINT OF BIOGRAPHY

ALICE MEYNELL

There are few writers now—of the third class extremely few—who have not something sharp and sad to say about the cruelty of nature, few who are able to attempt May in the woods without a modern reference to the manifold death and destruction with which the air, the branches, the mosses are said to be filled

But no one has paused in the course of these phrases to take notice of the curious and conspicuous fact of the suppression of death and of the dead throughout this landscape of manifest life. Where are they—all the dying, all the dead, of the populous woods? Where do they hide their little last hours, where are they buried? Where is the violence concealed? Under what gay custom and decent habit? You may see, it is true, an earthworm in a robin's beak, and may hear a thrush breaking a snail's shell, but these little things are, as it were, passed by with a kind of twinkle for apology, as by a well-bred man who does openly some little solecism which is too slight for direct mention, and which a meaner man might hide or avoid. Unless you are very modern indeed, you twinkle back at the birds.

But otherwise there is nothing visible of the havoc and the prey and plunder. It is certain that much of the visible life passes violently into other forms, flashes without pause into another flame, but not all. There are, for instance, few birds of prey left in our more accessible counties now, and many thousands of birds must die uncaught by a hawk and unpierced. But

if their killing is done so modestly, so then is their dying also. Short lives have all these wild things, but there are innumerable flocks of them always alive, they must die, then, in innumerable flocks. And yet they keep the millions of the dead out of sight.

Now and then, indeed, they may be betrayed. It happened in a cold winter long ago. The late frosts were so sudden, and the famine was so complete, that the birds were taken unawares. The sky and the earth conspired, that February, to make known all the secrets; everything was published. Death was manifest. Editors, when a great man dies, are not more resolute than was the frost of '95.

The birds were obliged to die in public. They became like Shelley in the monument which the art and imagination of England combined to raise to his memory at Oxford.

Frost was surely at work in both cases, and in both it wrought wrong. There is a similarity of unreason in betraying the death of a bird and in exhibiting the death of Shelley. The death of a soldier—*passé encore*. But the death of Shelley was not his goal. And the death of the birds is so little characteristic of them that, as has just been said, no one in the world is aware of their dying, except only in the case of birds in cages, who, again, are compelled to die with observation. The woodland is guarded and kept by a rule. There is no display of the battlefield in the fields. There is no tale of the game-bag, no boast. The hunting goes on, but with strange decorum. You may pass a fine season under the trees, and see nothing dead except here and there where a boy has been by, or a man with a trap, or a man with a gun. There is nothing like a butcher's shop in the woods.

But the biographers have always had other ways than those of the wild world. They will not have a man to die out of sight. I have turned over scores of "Lives," not to read them, but to see whether now and again there might be a "Life" which was not more emphatically a death. But there never is a modern biography that has taken the hint of Nature. One and all, these books have the disproportionate illness, the death out of all scale.

Even more wanton than the disclosure of a death is that of a mortal illness. If the man had recovered, his illness would have been rightly his own secret. But because he did not recover, it is assumed to be news for the first comer. Which of us would suffer the details of any physical suffering, over and done in our own lives, to be displayed and described? This is not a confidence we have a mind to make, and no one is authorized to ask for attention or pity on our behalf. The story of pain ought not to be told of us, seeing that by us it would assuredly not be told.

There is only one other thing that concerns a man still more exclusively, and that is his own mental illness, or the dreams and illusions of a long delirium. When he is in common language not himself, amends should be made for so bitter a paradox, he should be allowed such solitude as is possible to the alienated spirit, he should be left to the "not himself," and spared the intrusion against which he can so ill guard that he could hardly have even resented it.

The double helplessness of delusion and death should keep the door of an alienated poet's house, for example, and refuse him to the reader. His moral illness had nothing to do with his poetry. Some rather affected objection is taken every now and then to the publication

of some facts (others being already well known) in the life of Shelley. Nevertheless, these are all, properly speaking, biography. What is not biography is the detail of the accident of the manner of his death, the detail of his cremation. Or if it was to be told—told briefly—it was certainly not for marble. Shelley's death had no significance, except inasmuch as he died young. It was a detachable and disconnected incident. Ah, that was a frost of fancy and of the heart that used it so, dealing with an insignificant fact, and conferring a futile immortality. Those are ill-named biographers who seem to think that a betrayal of the ways of death is a part of their ordinary duty, and that if material enough for a last chapter does not lie to their hand they are to search it out. They, of all survivors are called upon, in honour and reason, to look upon a death with more composure. To those who loved the dead closely, this is, for a time, impossible, to them death becomes, for a year, disproportionate, their dreams are fixed upon it night by night. They have, in those dreams, to find the dead in some labyrinth, they have to mourn his dying and to welcome his recovery in such a mingling of distress and of always incredulous happiness as is not known even to dreams save in that first year of separation. But they are not biographers.

If death is the privacy of the woods, it is the more conspicuously secret because it is their only privacy. You may watch or may surprise everything else. The nest is retired, not hidden. The chase goes on everywhere. It is wonderful how the perpetual chase seems to cause no perpetual fear. The songs are all audible. Life is undefended, careless, alert, and noisy.

It is a happy thing that minor artists have ceased, or almost ceased, to paint dead birds. Time was when

they did it continually in the English School of water-colour art, stippled, of which surrounding nations, it was agreed, were envious. They must have killed their bird to paint him, for he is not to be caught dead. A bird is more easily caught alive than dead

A poet, on the contrary, is easily—too easily—caught dead. Minor artists now seldom stipple the bird on its back, but a good sculptor and a University together modelled their Shelley on his back, unessentially drowned; and everybody may read about the sick mind of a great poet.

THE CHILD OF TUMULT

ALICE MEYNELL

A Poppy bud, packed into tight bundles by so hard and resolute a hand that the petals of the flower never afterwards lose the creases, is a type of the child. Nothing but the unfolding, which is as yet in the non-existing future, can explain the manner of the close folding of character. In both flower and child it looks much as though the process had been the reverse of what it was—as though a finished and open thing had been folded up into the bud—so plainly and certainly is the future implied, and the intention of compressing and folding-close made manifest.

With the other incidents of childish character, the crowd of impulses called "naughtiness" is perfectly perceptible—it would seem heartless to say how soon. The naughty child (who is often an angel of tenderness and charm, affectionate beyond the capacity of his fellows, and a very ascetic of penitence when the time comes) opens early his brief campaigns and raises the standard of revolt as soon as he is capable of the desperate joys of disobedience.

But even the naughty child is an individual, and must not be treated in the mass. He is numerous indeed, but not general, and to describe him you must take the unit, with all his incidents and his organic qualities as they are. Take then, for instance, one naughty child in the reality of his life. He is but six years old, slender and masculine, and not wronged by long hair, curls, or effeminate dress. His face is delicate and too

often haggard with tears of penitence that Justice herself would be glad to spare him. Some beauty he has, and his mouth especially is so lovely as to seem not only angelic but itself an angel. He has absolutely no self-control and his passions find him without defence. They come upon him in the midst of his usual brilliant gaiety and cut short the frolic comedy of his fine spirits.

Then for a wild hour he is the enemy of the laws. If you imprison him, you may hear his resounding voice as he takes a running kick at the door, shouting his justification in unconquerable rage. "I'm good now!" is made as emphatic as a shot by the blow of his heel upon the panel. But if the moment of forgiveness is deferred, in the hope of a more promising repentance, it is only too likely that he will betake himself to a hostile silence and use all the revenge yet known to his imagination. "Darling mother, open the door!" cries his touching voice at last, but if the answer should be "I must leave you for a short time, for punishment," the storm suddenly thunders again. "There (crash!) I have broken a plate, and I'm glad it is broken into such little pieces that you can't mend it. I'm going to break the electric light." When things are at this pass there is one way, and only one, to bring the child to an overwhelming change of mind, but it is a way that would be cruel, used more than twice or thrice in his whole career of tempest and defiance. This is to let him see that his mother is troubled, "Oh, don't cry! Oh, don't be sad!" he roars, unable still to deal with own passionate anger, which is still dealing with him. With his kicks of rage he suddenly mingles a dance of apprehension lest his mother should have tears in her eyes. Even while he is still explicitly impenitent and defiant he tries to pull her round to the light that he may see her face. It is

but a moment before the other passion of remorse comes to make havoc of the helpless child, and the first passion of anger is quelled outright

Only to a trivial eye is there nothing tragic in the sight of these great passions within the small frame, the small will, and, in a word, the small nature. When a large and sombre fate befalls a little nature, and the stage is too narrow for the action of a tragedy, the disproportion has sometimes made a mute and unexpressed history of actual life or sometimes a famous book, it is the manifest core of George Eliot's story of "Adam Bede," where the suffering of Hetty is, as it were, the eye of the storm. All is expressive around her, but she is hardly articulate, the book is full of words—preachings, speeches, daily talk, aphorisms, but a space of silence remains about her in the midst of the story. And the disproportion of passion—the inner disproportion—is at least as tragic as that disproportion of fate and action; it is less intelligible, and leads into the intricacies of nature which are more difficult than the turn of events.

It seems, then, that this passionate play is acted within the narrow limits of a child's nature far oftener than in a nature adult and finally formed. And this, evidently, because there is unequal force at work within a child, unequal growth and jostling of powers and energies that are hurrying to their development and pressing for exercise and life. It is this helpless inequality—this untimeliness—that makes the guileless comedy mingling with the tragedies of a poor child's day. He knows thus much—that life is troubled around him and that the fates are strong. He implicitly confesses "the strong hours" of antique song. This same boy—the tempestuous child of passion and revolt—went out with quiet cheerfulness for a walk lately, saying as his cap was put on, "Now,

mother, you are going to have a little peace." This way of accepting his own conditions is shared by a sister, a very little older, who, being of an equal and gentle temper, indisposed to violence of every kind and tender to all without disquiet, observes the boy's brief frenzies as a citizen observes the climate. She knows the signs quite well and can at any time give the explanation of some particular outburst, but without any attempt to go in search of further or more origination that is the least charming of the ways of some little girls. *Elle ne faut que constater*. Her equanimity has never been overset by the wildest of his moments and she has witnessed them all. It is needless to say that she is not frightened by his drama, for Nature takes care that her young creatures shall not be injured by sympathies. Nature encloses them in the innocent indifference that preserves their brains from the more harassing kinds of distress.

Even the very frenzy of rage does not long dim or depress the boy. It is his repentance that makes him pale, and Nature here has been rather forced, perhaps—with no very good result. Often must a mother wish that she might for a few years govern her child (as far as he is governable) by the lowest motives—trivial punishments and paltry rewards—rather than by any kind of appeal to his sensibilities. She would wish to keep the words "right" and "wrong" away from his childish ears, but in this she is not seconded by her lieutenants. The child himself is quite willing to close with her plans, in so far as he is able, and is reasonably interested in the results of her experiments. He wishes her attempts in his regard to have a fair chance. "Let's hope I'll be good all to-morrow," he says with the peculiar cheerfulness of his ordinary voice. "I do hope so, old man." "Then I'll get my penny. Mother, I

was only naughty once yesterday; if I have only one naughtiness to-morrow, will you give me a half-penny?" "No reward except for real goodness all day long." "All right."

It is only too probable that this system (adopted only after the failure of other ways of reform) will be greatly disapproved as one of bribery. It may, however, be curiously inquired whether all kinds of reward might not equally be burlesqued by that word, and whether any government, spiritual or civil, has ever even professed to deny rewards. Moreover, those who would not give a child a penny for being good will not hesitate to fine him a penny for being naughty, and rewards and punishments must stand or fall together. The more logical objection will be that goodness is ideally the normal condition, and that it should have, therefore, no explicit extraordinary result, whereas naughtiness, being abnormal, should have a visible and unusual sequel. To this the rewarding mother may reply that it is not reasonable to take "goodness" in a little child of strong passions as the normal condition. The natural thing for him is to give full sway to impulses that are so violent as to overbear his powers.

But, after all, the controversy returns to the point of practice. What is the thought, or threat, or promise that will stimulate the weak will of the child, in the moment of rage and anger, to make a sufficient resistance? If the will were naturally as well developed as the passions, the stand would be soon made and soon successful, but as it is there must needs be a bracing by the suggestion of joy or fear. Let, then, the stimulus be of a mild and strong kind at once, and mingled with the thought of distant pleasure. To meet the suffering of rage and frenzy by the suffering of fear is assuredly to make of

the little unquiet mind a battle-place of feelings too hurtfully tragic. The penny is mild and strong at once, with its still distant but certain joys of purchase; the promise and hope break the mood of misery, and the will takes heart to resist and conquer

It is only in the lesser naughtiness that he is master of himself. The lesser the evil fit the more deliberate. So that his mother, knowing herself to be not greatly feared, once tried to mimic the father's voice with a menacing, "What's that noise?" The child was persistently crying and roaring on an upper floor, in contumacy against his French nurse, when the barytone and threatening question was sent pealing up the stairs. The child was heard to pause and listen and then to say to his nurse, "*Ce n'est pas Monsieur, c'est Madame,*" and then, without further loss of time, to resume the interrupted clamours

Obviously, with a little creature of six years, there are two things mainly to be done—to keep the delicate brain from the evil of the present excitement, especially the excitement of painful feeling, and to break the habit of passion. Now that we know how certainly the special cells of the brain which are locally affected by pain and anger become hypertrophied by so much use, and all too ready for use in the future at the slightest stimulus, we can no longer slight the importance of habit. Any means, then, that can succeed in separating a little child from the habit of anger does fruitful work for him in the helpless time of his childhood. The work is not easy, but a little thought should make it easy for the elders to avoid the provocation which they—who should ward off provocations—are apt to bring about by sheer carelessness. It is only in childhood that our race

knows such physical abandonment to sorrow and tears, as a child's despair, and the theatre with us must needs copy childhood if it would catch the note and action of a creature without hope.

ALICE MEYNELL

1850—1922

Mrs. Meynell (Alice Christiana Thompson), poet and essayist, was the younger sister of Lady Butler, the distinguished battle-painter. She was educated privately by her father, and in her youth spent much time in Italy. In 1877 she married Wilfrid Meynell, the critic, their daughter Viola Meynell is a novelist and critic. Alice Meynell's first volume of verse was praised by Ruskin, of whom she has written an illuminating criticism. Apart from her poems she occupied herself largely with the writing of essays and critical introductions, and the editing of anthologies which show fine taste and literary judgment. Her collections of essays include "The Rhythm of Life," "The Colour of Life" (1896), "Selected Essays," and "Childhood." Her "Collected Poems" appeared in 1913, some additional poems were published in 1917. All her writing is marked by graceful and delicate craftsmanship, her prose is the prose of a poet, and is tinged with the mysticism found in her verse.

THE COLOUR OF LIFE

This extract shows Mrs. Meynell's æsthetic delight in colour—on land and sea, in town and country, in sky and lake, and in the human body. Towards the end there is a note of asperity regarding the political rights so long denied to women, excepting only the right of dying for their convictions.

- 129 **life broken open**—in allusion to published biographies that reveal the most intimate details of the life and death of their subjects
- 129 **hidden in a napkin**—see the Parable of the Talents in the Bible (*Matthew*, xxxv)
- 130 **top-hat—tall silk hat**

130. **chapeau melon**—hat with rounded crown (French).
 130. **Serpentine**—a winding stretch of ornamental water in Hyde Park, London, where public bathing is allowed before 8 A.M. and after 8 P.M.
 130. **slough**—(pron *sluff*) a covering that can be cast off, *e.g.*, a snake's skin, here applied to clothing.
 130. **gamin**—a street Arab, an urchin
 130. **Eleonora Duse**—(pron *Doo-say*) a brilliant Italian actress.
 131. **Cockney**—belonging to London
 131. **Mr Pecksniff**—a selfish canting hypocrite in Dickens's novel "Martin Chuzzlewit"
 132. **Robespierre**—a leader in the French Revolution he was guillotined in 1794
 132. **Olympe de Gouges**—one of Robespierre's female victims.

HAVE PATIENCE, LITTLE SAINT

This essay deals with the English attitude towards beggars, and contrasts it with the courteous manner of the Italians, Portuguese, Spaniards, and others in the south of Europe "Have patience, little saint" expresses a polite refusal

134. **Vere de Vere**—here stands for any aristocratic family or caste See Tennyson's poem "Lady Clara Vere de Vere"
 134. **palazzo**—a large and splendid house (Italian)
 134. **patois**—(pron *pat-uaw*) a dialect of the common people.
 134. **"familiar vulgar"**—see Shakespeare's "Hamlet," Act I, scene 3
 137. **trolling**—singing in careless fashion

A POINT OF BIOGRAPHY

This essay is a protest against the violation of the privacy of death by the erection at Oxford of a monument to the poet Shelley, it represents the manner of his death by drowning off the coast of Italy in 1822 The authoress contrasts this unbecom-

ing display with Nature's silent and hidden disposal of her dead.

139 **solecism**—breach of an accepted rule or fashion of speech and conduct

46 ***passe encore***—still goes on, is a matter of course

47 **paradox**—an apparent contradiction in terms

47. **alienated**—mentally disordered, "not himself"

49. **stippled**—in allusion to a mode of painting in which the effect is produced by dots instead of lines

THE CHILD OF TUMULT

This psychological essay deals with child training, the formation of good habits by the avoidance of occasions for passion and self-will, and by the judicious promise of reward for efforts at self-control and obedience

145 **Hetty**—in George Eliot's novel "Adam Bede" we have the tragic history of Hetty Sorrell, a weak and self-willed girl living amongst serious and religious people.

146 ***Elle ne fait***, etc.—she remains unmoved (French)

148 **barytone**—or baritone, a deep-tone voice

148 ***Ce n'est pas***, etc—"it is not father (master), it is mother (mistress)"

148 **hypetrophied**—over-stimulated

THE BRITISH HOME—1908 AT THE SMITH'S.

ARNOLD BENNETT

Mr. Smith returns to his home of an evening at 6-30. Mr. Smith's home is in a fairly long street, containing some dozens of homes exactly like Mr Smith's. It has a drawing-room and a dining-room, two or three bed-rooms, and one or two attics, also a narrow hall (with stained glass in the front door), a kitchen, a bathroom, a front garden, and a back garden. It has a service of gas and of water, and excellent drains. The kitchen range incidentally heats the water for the bathroom, so that the bath water is hottest at about noon on Sundays, when nobody wants it, and coldest first thing in the morning, and last thing at night, when everybody wants it. (This is a detail. The fact remains that when hot water is really required it can always be had by cooking a joint of beef.)

The house and its two gardens are absolutely private. The front garden is made private by iron rails, its sole purposes are to withdraw the house a little from the road and to enable the servant to fill up her spare time by washing tiles. The back garden is made private by match-boarding. The house itself is made private by a mysterious substance unsurpassed as a conductor of sound.

Mr. Smith's home is adequately furnished. There may be two beds in a room, but each person has a bed. Carpets are everywhere, easy-chairs and a sofa do not lack. Linen is sufficient, crockery is plenteous. As for

'cutlery, Mr. Smith belongs to the only race in the world which allows itself a fresh knife and fork to each course of a meal. The drawing-room is the best apartment and the least used. It has a piano, but, as the drawing-room fire is not a constant phenomenon, pianists can only practise with regularity and comfort during four months of the year—hence, perhaps, a certain mediocrity of performance.

Mr Smith sits down to tea in the dining-room. According to fashionable newspapers, tea as a square meal has quite expired in England. On six days a week, however, tea still constitutes the chief repast in about ninety-nine per cent of English homes. At the table are Mrs Smith and three children—John, aged 25, Mary, aged 22, and Harry, aged 15. For I must inform you that Mr Smith is 50 and his wife is very near 50. Mr. Smith gazes round at his home, his wife, and his children. He has been at work in the world for thirty-four years, and this spectacle is what he has to show for his labour. It is his reward. It is the supreme result. He hurries through his breakfast, and spends seven industrious hours at the works in order that he may have tea nicely with his own family in his own home of a night.

Well, the food is wholesome and sufficient, and they whose health is not what it ought to be. Mr Smith conceals his pride in his children, but the pride is there. Impossible that he should not be proud! He has the right to be proud. John is a personable young man, earning more and more every year. Mary is charming in her pleasant blouse, and Harry is getting enormous, and will soon be leaving school.

This tea, which is the daily blossoming-time of the home that Mr Smith and his wife have constructed with twenty-six years' continual effort, ought to be a very

agreeable affair. Surely the materials for pleasure are present! But it does not seem to be a very agreeable meal. There is no regular conversation. Everybody has the air of being pre-occupied with his own affairs. A long stretch of silence, then some chaffing or sardonic remark by one child to another, then another silence; then a monosyllable from Mr Smith, then another silence.

No subject of wide interest is ever seriously argued at that table. No discussion is ever undertaken for the sake of discussion. It has never occurred to anyone named Smith that conversation in general is an art and may be a diverting pastime, and that conversation at table is a duty. Besides, conversation is nourished on books, and books are rarer than teaspoons in that home. Further, at back of the excellent, honest, and clean mind of every Smith is the notion that politeness is something that one owes only to strangers.

When tea is over—and it is soon over—young John Smith silently departs to another home, very like his own, in the next street but one. In that other home is a girl whom John sincerely considers to be the pearl of womanhood. In a few months John, inspired and aided by this pearl, will embark in business for himself as constructor of a home.

Mary Smith wanders silently and inconspicuously into the drawing-room (it being, as you know, summer) and caresses the piano in an expectant manner. John's views as to the identity of the pearl of womanhood are not shared by another young man who lives not very far off. This other young man has no doubt whatever that the pearl of womanhood is precisely Mary Smith (an idea which had never entered John's head), and he comes to see Mary every night, with the permission of her

parents. The pair are, in fact, engaged. Probably Mary opens the door for him, in which case they go straight to the drawing room (One is glad to think that, after all, the drawing-room is turning out useful) Young Henry has disappeared from human ken

Mr Smith and wife remained in the dining-room, separated from each other by a newspaper, which Mr. Smith is ostensibly reading I say "ostensibly," for what Mr Smith is really reading on the page of the newspaper is this "I shall have to give something to John, something pretty handsome. Of course, there's no question of a dowry with Mary, but I shall have to give something handsome to her, too And weddings cost money And I have no saving except my insurance." He keeps on reading this in every column. It is true He is still worried about money, as he was twenty-six years ago He had lived hard and honourably, ever at strain, and never had a moment's true peace of mind once it was the fear of losing his situation, now it is the fear of his business going wrong, always it has been the tendency of expenditure to increase The fruit of his ancient immense desire to have Mrs Smith is now ripe for falling The home which he and she have built is finished now, and is to be disintegrated And John and Mary are about to begin again what their parents once began I can almost hear Mr Smith plaintively asking the newspaper, as he thinks over the achieved enterprise of his home Has it been a success? Is it a success?

THE MIDLANDS—1910-1911 THE ISLE OF MAN

ARNOLD BENNETT

It seemed solid enough. I leaned for an instant over the rail on the quarter away from the landing-stage, and there, at the root of the high precipice formed by the side of the vessel, was the wavy water. A self-important, self-confident man standing near me lighted a black cigar of unseemly proportions, and threw the match into the water. The match was lost at once in the waves, which far below beat up futilely against the absolutely unmoved precipice. I had never been on such a large steamer before. I said to myself "This is all right."

However, that was not the moment to go into ecstasies over the solidity of the steamer. I had to secure a place for myself. Hundreds of people on the illimitable deck were securing places for themselves. And many of them were being aided by a porter. The number of people seemed to exceed the number of seats; it certainly exceeded the number of nice sheltered corners. I picked up my portmanteau with one hand and my bag and my sticks and my rug with the other. Then I dropped the portmanteau. A portmanteau has the peculiar property of possessing different weights. You pick it up in your bedroom, and it seems a feather. You say to yourself: "I can carry that easily—save tips to porters." "But in a public place its weight changes for the worse with every yard you walk. At twenty yards it weighs half a ton. At forty yards no steam crane could support it.

You drop it. Besides, the carrying of it robs your movements of all grace and style. Well, I had carried that bag myself from the cab to the steamer, across the landing-stage, and up the gangway. Economy! I had spent a shilling on a useless magazine, and I grudged threepence to a porter with a wife and family! I was wearing a necktie whose price represented the upkeep of the porter and his wife and family for a full twenty-four hours, and yet I wouldn't employ the porter to the tune of threepence Economy! These thoughts flashed through my head with the rapidity of lightning.

You see, I could not skip about for a deck-chair with that portmanteau in my hand. But if I left it lying on the deck, which was like a street . . . well, thieves, professional thieves, thieves who specialise in departing steamers! They nip off with your things while you are looking for a chair, the steamer bell sounds; and there you are! Nevertheless, I accepted the horrid risk and left all my belongings in the middle of the street.

Not a free chair, not a red deck-chair, not a corner! There were seats by the rail at one extremity of the boat, and at the other extremity of the boat, but no chair to be had. Thousands of persons reclining in chairs, and thousands of others occupied by bags, rugs, and bonnet-boxes, but no empty chair.

"Want a deck-chair, governor," a bearded mariner accosted me.

Impossible to conceal from him that I did. But, being perhaps the ship's carpenter, was he going to manufacture a chair for me on the spot? I knew not how he did it, but in about thirty seconds he produced a chair out of the entrails of the ship, and fixed it for me in a beautiful situation, just forward of the funnel,

and close to a charming young woman, and a little deck-house in front for protection! It was exactly what I wanted, the most stationary part of the entire vessel

Sixpence! Economy! Still, I couldn't give him less. Moreover, I only had twopence in coppers

"What will the voyage be like?" I asked him with false jollity, as he touched his cap

"Grand, sir!" he replied enthusiastically.

Yes, and if I had given him a shilling the voyage would have been the most magnificent and utterly perfect voyage that ship ever made

No sooner was I comfortably installed in that almost horizontal deck-chair than I was aware of a desire to roam about, watch the casting-off and the behaviour of the poor stay-at-home crowd on the landing-stage, a very keen desire. But I would not risk the portmanteau again. Nothing should part us till the gangways were withdrawn. Absurd, of course! Human nature is absurd. . . I caught the charming young woman's eye about a dozen times. The ship got fuller and fuller. With mean and paltry joy I perceived other passengers seeking for chairs and not finding them, and I gazed at them with haughty superiority. Then a fiendish, an incredible, an appalling screech over my head made me jump in a silly way quite unworthy of a man who is reclining next to a charming young woman, and apt to prejudice him in her eyes. It was merely the steamer announcing that we were off. I sprang up, trying to make the spring seem part of the original jump. I looked. And lo! The whole landing-stage with all the people and horses and cabs was moving backwards, floating away, while the enormous ship stood quite still! A most singular effect!

In a minute we were in the middle of the river, and my portmanteau was safe. I left it in possession of

the chair.

The next strange phenomenon of my mental condition was an extraordinary curiosity in regard to the ship. I had to explore it. I had to learn all about it. I began counting the people on the deck, but soon after I had come to the man with the unseemly black cigar I lost count. Then I went down stairs. There seemed to be staircases all over the place. You could scarcely move without falling down a staircase. And I came to another deck also full of people and bags, and fitted with other staircases that led still lower. And on the sloping ceiling of one of these lower staircases I saw the Board of Trade certificate of the ship. A most interesting document. It gave the tonnage as 2000, and the legal number of passengers as about the same, and it said there were over two thousand life-belts on board, and room on the eight boats for I don't remember how many shipwrecked voyagers. It even gave the captain's Christian name. You might think that this would slake my curiosity. But, no! It urged me on. Lower down—somewhere near the caverns at the bottom of the sea, I came across marble halls, upholstered in velvet, where at snowy tables people were unconcernedly eating steaks and drinking tea. I said to myself "At such and such an hour I will come down here and have tea. It will break the monotony of the voyage." Looking through the round windows of the restaurant I saw strips of flying green.

Then I thought "The engines!" and somehow the word "reciprocating" came into my mind. I really must go and see the engines reciprocate. I had never seen anything reciprocate, except possibly my Aunt Hilda at the New Year, when she answered my letter of good wishes. I discovered that many other persons had been

drawn down towards the engine-room by the attraction of the spectacle of reciprocity. And as a spectacle it was assuredly majestic, overwhelming, and odorous. I must learn the exact number of times those engines reciprocated in a minute, and I took out my watch for the purpose. Other gazers at once did the same. It seemed to be a matter of the highest importance that we should know the precise speed of those engines. Then I espied a large brass plate which appeared to have been affixed to the engine-room in order to inform the engineers that the ship was built by Messrs Macconochie and Sons, of Dumbarton. Why Dumbarton? Why not Halifax? And why must this precious information always be staring the engineers in the face? I wondered whether "Sons" were married, and, if so, what the relations were between Sons' wives and old Mrs Macconachie. Then, far down, impossibly far down, furlongs beneath those gesticulating steely arms, I saw a coal pit on fire and demons therein with shovels. And all of a sudden it occurred to me that I might as well climb up again to my own special deck.

I did so. The wind blew my hat off, my hat ran half-way up the street before I could catch it. I caught it and clung to the rail. We were just passing a light-ship, the land was vague behind, in front there was nothing but wisps of smoke here and there. Then I saw a flashing-smack, tossing like anything, its bows went down into the sea and then jerked themselves fairly out of the sea, and this process went on and on and on. And although I was not aboard the smack, it disconcerted me. However, I said to myself, "How glad I am to be on a nice firm steamer, instead of on that smack!" I looked at my watch again. We seemed to have been away from England about seven days, but it was barely three-quarters

of an hour. The offensive man with the cigar went swaggering by. And then a steward came up out of the depths of the sea with a tray full of glasses of beer, and a group of men lolling in deck-chairs started to drink this beer. I cared not for the sight. I said to myself, "I will go and sit down" And as I stepped forward the deck seemed to sink away ever so slightly. A trifle. Perhaps a delusion on my part. Surely nothing so solid as that high road of a deck could sink away! Having removed my portmanteau from my chair, I sat down. The charming girl was very pale, with eyes closed. Possibly asleep! Many people had the air of being asleep. Every chair was now occupied. Still, dozens of boastful persons were walking to and fro, pretending to have the easy sea-legs of Lord Charles Beresford. The man with the atrocious cigar (that is, another atrocious cigar) swung by. Hateful individual! "You wait a bit!" I said to him (in my mind) "You'll see!"

I, too, shut my eyes, keeping very still. A grand voyage! Certainly a grand voyage! Then I woke up. I had been asleep. It was tea-time. But I would not have descended to that marble restaurant for ten thousand pounds. For the first time I was indifferent to tea in the afternoon. However, after another quarter of an hour, I had an access of courage. I rose. I walked to the rail. The horizon was behaving improperly. I saw that I had made a mistake. But I dared not move. To move would have been death. I clung to the rail. There was my chair five yards off, but as inaccessible as if it had been five miles off. Years passed. Pale I must have been, but I retained my dignity. More years rolled by. Then, by accident, I saw what resembled a little cloud on the horizon.

It was the island! The mere sight of the island

gave me hope and strength, and cheek.

In half-an-hour—you will never guess it—I was lighting a cigarette, partly for the benefit of the charming young woman, and partly to show that offensive man with the cigars that he was not the Shah of Persia. He had not suffered. Confound him!

ARNOLD BENNETT

1867—

Enoch Arnold Bennett, novelist, dramatist, and journalist, was born in North Staffordshire, England. His father was a solicitor in the "Potteries," this district, with which Arnold Bennett's name is now inseparably associated, comprises the Five Towns of Hanley, Stoke, Burslem, Longton, and Tunstall (see "The Old Wives' Tale")

While still a clerk in his father's office, Bennett dabbled in casual journalism, in 1893 he became an assistant editor in London, and an editor in 1896. But in 1900 he deliberately took to literature as a serious profession, devoting himself to the most assiduous preparation for his life's work as a writer of realistic fiction and drama. The list of his published works—novels, short stories, essays and criticisms, dramas, literary manuals, and reminiscences—is a very long one, for his versatility and industry are extraordinary. Among his novels we may note "The Old Wives' Tale" (1908), which is usually regarded as his masterpiece, the trilogy or group of three—"Clayhanger," "Hilda Lessways," and "These Twain," and "Riceyman's Steps" (1923). In drama he has produced "Milestones," "The Great Adventure," and "Body and Soul," as well as "Cupid and Common Sense," dramatised from his novel "Anna of the Five Towns." Other works include "The Author's Craft," "Literary Taste: How to Form it," "Mental Efficiency," "The Plain Man and his Wife" (a book of Essays), "Over There: War Scenes on the Western Front" (1915), "Books and Persons," "Things that Have Interested Me," and "Our Women: Chapters on the Sex Discord."

The extracts given in this volume illustrate very clearly the power of Bennett to discover the universal in the particular. His skill in the portrayal of ordinary persons living commonplace lives in dull surroundings is revealed in all his work, and is the main source of his strength as a writer. Without any attempt

at fine writing he suggests the peculiar atmosphere of certain phases of English social life, while showing an insight into the fundamental characteristics of human nature. His literary art is evident in his choice of microscopic details, his detached point of view, his quiet humour, and his power to create living and breaking characters. He is sometimes accused of pessimism, but we have his own declaration to the contrary: "It is often said that no thinking man can be happy in this world, my view is that the more a man thinks, the more happy he is likely to be." His reputation is likely to endure, if only through the realism of his graphic pictures of life in "The Five Towns"

THE BRITISH HOME

This is a sketch of lower middle-class life in England.

156 **square meal**—a solid, satisfying meal

156 **personable**—handsome

THE MIDLANDS

The Isle of Man, an island in the Irish Sea, is a popular holiday resort of people from the Midlands or middle countries of England. The voyage to the island is a short one, but many passengers unaccustomed to the sea suffer from sea-sickness. They start confidently with an exploration of the ship, then become sick and miserable, but their spirits revive as soon as the land is sighted.

162 **reciprocating**—with alternate backward and forward motion

164 **Lord Charles Beresford**—a distinguished officer of the British Navy (born 1846)

165. **cheek**—impudence, saucy speech (colloquial term)

THE DUTY OF THE HISTORIAN

G. K. CHESTERTON

We most of us suffer much from having learnt all our lessons in history from those little abridged history-books in use in most public and private schools. These lessons are insufficient—especially when you don't learn them. The latter was indeed my own case, and the little history I know I have picked up since rambling about in authentic books and countrysides. But the bald summaries of the small history-books still master and in many cases mislead us. The root of the difficulty is this, that there are two quite distinct purposes of history—the superior purpose, which is its use for children, and the secondary or inferior purpose, which is its use for historians. The highest and noblest thing that history can be is a good story. Then it appeals to the heroic heart of all generations, the eternal infancy of mankind. Such a story as that of William Tell could literally be told of any epoch, no barbarian implements could be too rude, no scientific instruments could be too elaborate for the pride and terror of the tale. It might be told of the first flint-headed arrow or the last model machine-gun, the point of it is the same, it is as eternal as tyranny and fatherhood. Now, wherever there is this function of the fine story in history we tell it to children only because it is a fine story. David and the cup of water, Regulus and the *atque sciebat*, Jeanne d'Arc kissing the cross of spear-wood, or Nelson shot with all his stars—these stir in every child the ancient heart of his race, and that is all that they need do. Changes

of costume and local colour are nothing; it did not matter that in the illustrated Bibles of our youth David was dressed rather like Regulus, in a Roman cuirass and sandals, any more than it mattered that in the illuminated Bibles of the Middle Ages he was dressed rather like Jeanne d'Arc, in a hood or a visored helmet. It will not matter to future ages if the pictures represent Jeanne d'Arc cremated in an asbestos stove or Nelson dying in a top-hat. For the childish and eternal use of history, the history will still be heroic.

But the historians have quite a different business. It is their affair, not merely to remember that humanity has been wise and great, but to understand the special ways in which it has been weak and foolish. Historians have to explain the horrible mystery of how fashions were ever fashionable. They have to analyse, that statuesque instinct of the South that moulds the Roman cuirass to the muscles of the human torso, or that element of symbolic extravagance in the later Middle Ages which let loose a menagerie upon breast and casque and shield. They have to explain, as best they can, how any one ever came to have a top-hat, how anyone ever endured an asbestos stove.

Now the mere tales of the heroes are a part of religious education, they are meant to teach us that we have souls. But the inquiries of the historians into the eccentricities of every epoch are merely a part of political education; they are meant to teach us to avoid certain perils or solve certain problems in the complexity of practical affairs. It is the first duty of a boy to admire the glory of Trafalgar. It is the first duty of a grown man to question its utility. It is one question whether it was a good thing as an episode in the struggle between Pitt and the French Revolution. It is quite another

matter that it was certainly a good thing in that immortal struggle between the son of man and all the unclean spirits of sloth and cowardice and despair. For the wisdom of man alters with every age, his prudence has to fit perpetually shifting shapes of inconvenience or dilemma. But his folly is immortal, a fire stolen from heaven.

Now, the little histories that we learnt as children were partly meant simply as inspiring stories. They largely consisted of tales like Alfred and the cakes or Eleanor and the poisoned wound. They ought to have entirely consisted of them. Little children ought to learn nothing but legends, they are the beginnings of all sound morals and manners. I would not be severe on the point; I would not exclude a story solely because it was true. But the essential on which I should insist would be, not that the tale must be true, but that the tale must be fine.

The attempts in the little school-histories to introduce older and subtler elements, to talk of the atmosphere of Puritanism or the evolution of our Constitution, is quite irrelevant and vain. It is impossible to convey to a barely breeched imp who does not yet know his own community, the exquisite divergence between it and some other community. What is the good of talking about the Constitution carefully balanced on three estates to a creature only quite recently balanced on two legs? What is the sense of explaining the Puritan shade of morality to a creature who is still learning with difficulty that there is any morality at all? We may put on one side the possibility that some of us may think the Puritan atmosphere an unpleasant one or the Constitution a trifle rickety on its three legs. The general truth remains that we should teach, to the young, men's enduring

truths, and let the learned amuse themselves with their passing errors

It is often said nowadays that in great crises and moral revolutions we need one strong man to decide; but it seems to me that that is exactly when we do not need him. We do not need a great man for a revolution, for a true revolution is a time when all men are great. Where despotism really is successful is in very small matters. Everyone must have noticed how essential a despot is to arranging the things in which everyone is doubtful, because everyone is indifferent the boats in a water picnic or the seats at a dinner-party. Here the man who knows his own mind is really wanted, for no one else ever thinks his own mind worth knowing. No one knows where to go to precisely because no one cares where he goes. It is for trivialities that the great tyrant ~~is meant~~

But when the depths are stirred in a society, and all men's souls grow taller in a transfiguring anger or desire, then I am by no means so certain that the great man has been a benefit even when he has appeared. I am sure that Cromwell and Napoleon managed the mere pipes and bayonets, boots, and knapsacks better than most other people could have managed them. But I am by no means sure that Napoleon gave a better turn to the whole French Revolution. I am by no means so sure that Cromwell has really improved the religion of England.

As it is in politics with the specially potent man, so it is in history with the specially learned. We do not need the learned man to teach us the important things. We all know the important things, though we all violate and neglect them. Gigantic industry, abysmal knowledge, are needed for the discovery of the tiny

things—the things that seem hardly worth the trouble. Generally speaking, the ordinary man should be content with the terrible secret that men are men—which is another way of saying that they are brothers. He had better think of Cæsar as a man and not as a Roman, for he will probably think of a Roman as a statue and not as a man. He had better think of Coeur-de-Lion as a man and not as a Crusader, or he will think of him as a stage Crusader. For every man knows the inmost core of every other man. It is the trappings and externals elected for an age and a fashion that are forgotten and unknown. It is all the curtains that are curtained, all the masks that are masked, all the disguises that are now disguised in dust and featureless decay. But though we cannot reach the outside of history, we all start from the inside. Some day, if I ransack whole libraries, I may know the outermost aspects of King Stephen, and almost see him in his habit as he lived, but the inmost I know already. The symbols are mouldered and the manner of the oath forgotten, the secret society may even be dissolved, but we all know the secret.

LAMP-POSTS

G. K. CHESTERTON

In contemplating some common object of the modern street, such as an omnibus or a lamp-post, it is sometimes well worth while to stop and think about why such common objects are regarded as commonplace. It is well worth while to try to grasp what is the significance of them—or rather, the quality in modernity which makes them so often seem not so much significant as insignificant. If you stop the omnibus while you stop to think about it, you will be unpopular. Even if you try to grasp its significance, you will almost certainly be misunderstood. Nevertheless, the problem is a real one, and not without bearing upon the most poignant politics and ethics of today. It is certainly not the things themselves, the idea and upshot of them, that are remote from poetry or even mysticism. The idea of a crowd of human strangers turned into comrades for a journey is full of the oldest pathos and piety of human life. That profound feeling of mortal fraternity and frailty, which tells us we are indeed all in the same boat, is not the same bus. As for the idea of the lamp-post, the idea of the fixed beacon of the branching thoroughfares, the terrestrial star of the terrestrial traveller, it not only could be, but actually is, the subject of countless songs.

Nor is it even true that there is something so trivial or ugly about the names of the things as to make them commonplace in all connexions. The word "Lamp" is especially beloved by the more decorative and poetic writers, it is a symbol, and very frequently a title. It

is true that if Ruskin had called his eloquent work "The Seven Lamp-Posts of Architecture" the effect, to a delicate ear, would not have been quite the same. But even the word "post" is in no sense impossible in poetry; it can be found with a fine military ring in phrases like "The Last Post" or "Dying at his Post." I remember, indeed, hearing, when a small child, the line in Macaulay's "Armada" about "with loose rein and bloody spur rode inland many a post," and being puzzled at the picture of a pillar-box or a lamp-post displaying so much activity. But certainly it is not the mere sound of the word that makes it unworkable in the literature of wonder or beauty. "Omnibus" may seem at first sight a more difficult thing to swallow—if I may be allowed a somewhat gigantesque figure of speech. This, it may be said, is a Cockney and ungainly modern word, as it is certainly a Cockney and ungainly modern thing. But even this is not true. The word "omnibus" is a very noble word with a very noble meaning and even tradition. It is derived from an ancient and adamantine tongue which has rolled it with very authoritative thunders, *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*. It is a word really more human and universal than republic or democracy. A man might very consistently build a temple for all the tribes of men, a temple of the largest pattern and the loveliest design, and then call it an omnibus. It is true that the dignity of this description has really been somewhat diminished by the illogical habit of clipping the word down to the last and least important part of it. But that is only one of many modern examples in which vulgarity is not in democracy, but rather in the loss of democracy. It is about as democratic to call an omnibus a "bus" as it would be to call a democrat a "rat."

Another way of explaining the cloud of commonplace interpretation upon modern things is to trace it to that spirit which often calls itself science but which is more often mere repetition. It is proverbial that a child, looking out of the nursery window, regards the lamp-post as part of a fairy-tale of which the lamp-lighter is the fairy. That lamp-post can be to a baby all that the moon could possibly be to a lover or a poet. Now, it is perfectly true that there is nowadays a spirit of cheap information which imagines that it shoots beyond this shining point, when it merely tells us that there are nine hundred lamp-posts in the town all exactly alike. It is equally true that there is a spirit of cheap science, which is equally cocksure of its conclusiveness when it tells us that there are so many thousand moons and suns, all much more alike than we might have been disposed to fancy. And we can say of both these calculations that there is *nothing* really commonplace except the mind of the calculator. The baby is much more right about the flaming lamp than the statistician who counts the posts in the street, and the lover is much more really right about the moon than the astronomer. Here the part is certainly greater than the whole. For it is much better to be tied to one wonderful thing than to allow a mere catalogue of wonderful things to deprive you of the capacity to wonder. It is doubtless true, to a definite extent, that a certain sameness in the mechanical modern creations makes them actually less attractive than the freer recurrences of nature, or, in other words, that twenty lamp-posts really are much more like each other than twenty trees. Nevertheless, even this character will not cover the whole ground, for men do not cease to feel the mystery of natural things even when they reproduce themselves almost completely, as in the case of pitch

darkness or a very heavy sleep. The mere fact that we have seen a lamp-post very often, and that it generally looked very much the same as before, would not of itself prevent us from appreciating its elfin fire, any more than it prevents the child

Finally, there is a neglected side of this psychological problem which is, I think, one aspect of the mystery of the morality of war. It is not altogether an accident that, while the London Lamp-post has always been mild and undistinguished, the Paris Lamp-post has been more historic because it has been more horrible. It has been a yet more revolutionary substitute for the guillotine—yet more revolutionary, because it was the guillotine of the mob, as distinct even from the guillotine of the Republic. They hanged aristocrats upon it, including (unless my memory misleads me) that exceedingly unpleasant aristocrat who promulgated the measure of war economy known as "Let them eat grass." Hence it happened that there has been in Paris a fanatical and flamboyant political newspaper actually called *La lanterne*, a paper for extreme Jacobins. If there were a paper in London called the *Lamp-Post*, I can only imagine it as a paper for children. As for my other example, I do not know whether even the French Revolution could manage to do anything with the omnibus, but the Jacobins were quite capable of using it as a tumbril.

In short, I suspect that Cockney things have become commonplace because there has been long lacking in them a certain savour of sacrifice and peril, which there has been in the nursery tale, for all its innocence, and which there has been in the Parisian Street, for all its iniquity.

The new wonder that has changed the world before our eyes is that all this crude and vulgar modern clock-work is most truly being used for a heroic end. It is

most emphatically being used for the slaying of a dragon. It is being used, much more unquestionably than the lantern of Paris, to make an end of a tyrant. It was a cant phrase in our cheaper literature of late to say that the new time will make the romance of war mechanical. Is it not more probable that it will make the mechanism of war romantic? As I said at the beginning, the things themselves are not repulsively prosaic, it was their associations that made them so, and today their associations are as splendid as any that ever blazoned a shield or embroidered a banner. Much of what made the violation of Belgium so violent a challenge to every conscience lay unconsciously in the fact that the country which had thus become tragic had often been regarded as commonplace. The unpardonable sin was committed in a place of Lamp-posts and omnibuses. In similar places has been prepared the just wrath and reparation and a legend of it will surely linger even in the omnibus that has carried heroes to the mouth of hell, and even in the lamp-post whose lamp has been darkened against the dragon of the sky.

G. K. CHESTERTON

1874—

George Keith Chesterton, journalist, poet, essayist, critic, and novelist, was born in Kensington, London, and educated at St. Paul's School. After attending classes at the Slade School of Art he began reviewing art-books for the periodical press, to which he still continues to be a most prolific contributor. His initials G. K. C. are familiar to readers throughout the English-speaking world. During the last quarter of a century he has produced over forty volumes in addition to numerous articles not yet issued in book form. He has written critical studies of Browning, Dickens, and the Victorian Age, a short history of England, some robust poetry, ingenious and whimsical novels, such as "The Club of Queer Trades" and "The Man who was Thursday," a play "Magic" (1913), a number of detective stories, and various collections of essays, such as "Orthodoxy," "Tremendous Trifles," "A Shilling for my Thoughts," "Alarms and Discussions," etc.

The greater portion of his miscellaneous prose, the product of "an acrobatic intellect," stamps Chesterton as in the main a versatile journalist, and the student will readily discover the special devices of his style—paradox, surprise, irony, hyperbole, dogmatism disguised as argument, and commonplace truths expressed as startling novelties. These tricks of style have become in his hands a kind of technical apparatus by means of which he conveys an impression of zest and exuberance that can only be described as "Chestertonian." Yet, in spite of his paradoxes and prejudices, he is an acute critic, and at bottom his opinions are often sound and substantial. He views life optimistically as a time for "feasting and fighting," all his work shows that pessimism and apathy are displeasing to him both in life and in literature. His work is unequal, but the short specimens included in this volume give a fairly good impression of his methods of

reasoning and of his vigorous style

THE DUTY OF THE HISTORIAN

This essay is a protest against the neglect of legends and the exaggerated importance attached to individuals in the writing of history.

169 **William Tell**—the legendary Swiss marksman who resisted Austrian tyranny and was condemned to shoot an apple off his own son's head

169 **David**—see the Bible (II *Samuel*) for the story of David's refusal to drink water obtained at the risk of his captain's lives

169 **Regulus**—the Roman general captured by the Carthaginians (B.C. 255) He was allowed to return to Rome to make terms of peace, but (as the Latin words mean) though he was well aware that he would be put to death for his action he urged the Roman senate not to assent to peace He returned to Carthage and was put to death with horrible tortures

169 **Jeanne d'Arc**—Joan of Arc (1412—1431), the Maid of Orleans

170 **asbestos**—an incombustible mineral

170. **top-hat**—a tall silk hat

170 **torso**—the trunk apart from head and limbs

170. **menagerie**—in allusion to the representing of animals in heraldic devices

171 **Alfred**—the king of England who when a fugitive from the Danes allowed the cottager's cakes to burn while he was meditating plans against his enemies

171. **Eleanore**—wife of Edward I, who is said to have saved his life by sucking the poison from a wound received in a Crusade

171 **three estates**—Lords Spiritual, Lords Temporal, and the House of Commons

173 **Coeur-de-Lion**—Richard I, the Lion-Hearted King of England (1189—1199).

- 173 **King Stephen**—reigned in England from 1135 to 1154.

LAMP-POSTS

This is a war-time essay, and refers to the extinguishing of all street-lights as a safeguard against the attacks of hostile aircraft ("the dragons of the sky")

- 176 **Seven Lamp-Posts**—Ruskin's seven lamps of Architecture are Sacrifice, Truth, Power, Beauty, Life, Memory, and Obedience
- 176 **Last Post**—the bugle-call as a signal for retiring for the night, also sounded at a soldier's funeral
- 176 **Cockney**—peculiar to native Londoners
- 176 *quod ubique*, etc—a Latin phrase meaning "What has been everywhere, always, and by everyone believed."
- 178 **eat grass**—said in derision of the poor starving people begging for bread
- 178 *La lanterne*—"The Lantern" or street lamp The ropes of street lamp-posts were used by the Paris revolutionaries for the hanging of aristocrats
- 178 **Jacobins**—a French group of extreme radicals, originally applied to revolutionists

THE MOUSE

ROBERT LYND

It is an engaging problem in ethics whether, if you have been lent a cottage, you have the right to feed the mice. There will for most people be only one answer to the question. Your first duty, they will tell you, is to the man who has been good enough to lend you his house, and you must do nothing that would damage it or even that would annoy him if he knew about it. On the other hand, it is reasonable to argue that the feelings of a mouse that is present are more to be considered than the feelings of a host who is absent. Besides, he need never know anything about it. He may be surprised on his return to find mice running up the clock, mice cantering up and down at the side of the fire-place, mice playing on the floor under the table, mice in his jam cup-board, mice nibbling the corners of the books on the lower shelves, mice, in fact, behaving as if the house were a vast restaurant for themselves and a creche for their children. But, as he is a good man, he will put all this down to accident, and will never suspect that the people to whom he lent the cottage could have done anything so disgraceful as actually to scatter food on the floor and invite the mice of the neighbourhood to make themselves at home.

I can write on the question without bias, because during the week-end I was the guest of the people who were feeding the mice and at the same time I was sleeping under the roof of the man during whose absence the mice were being fed contrary to his interests and contrary, I am sure, to his wishes. Besides, I

liked the people who were feeding the mice, though I could not altogether approve of their conduct. The mouse-hole was a large orifice in the varnished floor near the hearthstone, and, when the lamp was lit, the smaller of two girls went for a biscuit, broke it into small pieces, and placed these carefully in a ring round the hole. Then she sat down and, in perfect stillness, watched the mice till bed-time. I asked her if it would disturb the mice for the rest of us to talk, but she said that the mice did not mind, that they were accustomed to it, and, indeed, were quite tame. A few minutes later I had just got to the point of what I thought was a rather amusing story when she interrupted with a vibrant, excited whisper, "Look at the mouse" Strange, when there is a mouse in the room, it is impossible either to tell or to listen to a story I do not like being interrupted, but I found myself staring with the others at the little cave in the floor from which the head of a mouse had projected, like a jack-in-the-box, and was looking round at the world with its nervous, beady eyes It apparently came to the conclusion that we did not look very dangerous—that, indeed, we were merely a number of harmless lunatics—and hoisting itself, head and shoulders, out of the hole. It seized a piece of biscuit and ducked back out of sight with it again. There was a chorus of "The little darling!" "Isn't it perfectly sweet?" "Oh, the angels!" "Did you ever see such a darling little pet?" for so it is that angels and darlings in human form express themselves at sight of an animal they really like. Still, thinking of the unfortunate man who owned the cottage, I could not help reminding them that their attitude to the mouse was one of mistaken kindness. I pointed out to them that, when the owner of the house returned, he would be able to catch the mice all the more

easily on account of their tameness, and that to teach them to trust human beings was merely to lure them to their deaths. Nor would death be less bitter to them, I suggested, when they told themselves that it was due to the treachery of women and children. At this, the lady all but broke down, and I thought for the moment I had persuaded her that the most humane thing she could do was to try to frighten out of its wits every mouse that put its head through the floor "Oh yes, indeed!" she cried, wringing her hands, as she pictured the doom of the mice at the return of the proprietor; "it's *quite* true" But the elder of the children demurred "I think it's silly," she said "The mice will be caught anyway, whatever we do, poor little things All the more need for us to give them a good time while they're alive" "That, also, is quite true," said the lady, brightening up "And now," she went on, turning to me, "let's have the rest of the story" It is by no means easy to take up the thread of an anecdote that has been interrupted just as one has got to the point. "Well," I said, "you remember how Godfrey was left with the insurance policy" "I'm afraid I've forgotten," she apologized "The argument about the mice has driven everything else out of my mind Do begin all over again from the beginning" I hate having to repeat a story, but I obeyed, and was just reaching the point again, and smiling with satisfaction at the thought of the effect it would produce, when the small girl at the hearth once more called our attention with a hoarse, excited whisper "Look, it's coming out again!" Once more all heads turned on necks and all eyes were concentrated on the little cave in the floor. This time the mouse did not merely thrust its head and shoulders out of the hole It shot itself out bodily, and scampered

Along the floor behind the coal-scuttle. "That's the father," said the romantic one of the small girls; and again there were enthusiastic cries of "The darling!" "The angel!" and "Dear little thing!" I made no attempt to recover my anecdote, but I am afraid its double disappearance prejudiced me against the humane treatment of mice. I looked on them as my rivals—as my horribly successful rivals. Everybody, I told myself, was far more interested in mice than in me.

Yet I have always liked people who were kind to mice. I once knew a man whose bed-room was infested with mice. He bought a trap and set it, and during the night was awakened by the struggles of a mouse that had been caught in it. He immediately got up and released the mouse, and, next day, threw the trap into the dust-bin. Nor would he ever use a mouse-trap again. And I loved him for this. I also feel tenderly towards two maiden ladies of my acquaintance who are on such good terms with the mice in their flat that, if ever they go away for a holiday, they leave a little heap of meal on the floor "for the mice." The mouse, it seems to me, is a creature that we should all like, if it were not such a nuisance. Children like sweetmeats made in the shape of mice. They like a toy mouse in a cage. There is in the shape and the bright eyes of the little creature something that appeals to our affection. It is a natural pet, if it would behave like a pet. It is impossible to make war on it without twinges of conscience. There is in Coleridge correspondence a charming letter to Cottle, in which he declares that he is threatened by famine on account of mice, but that he cannot bring himself to set a mouse-trap. He says that to bait a trap is as much as to say to the mouse, "Come and have a piece of cheese," and that, when it accepts the invitation,

to do it to death is a betrayal of the laws of hospitality. Certainly, when you come to think of it, no Borgia ever treated a guest more dishonourably. The only honourable way to make war on mice, it seems to me, is not to deceive them with any pretence of friendship, as who should say, "This is Liberty Hall. Here's cheese for you," but to keep a cat and let the mice come out of their holes at their peril. Most people, however, would like even cats to be more humane. They hate to see a cat actually killing a mouse. It is an unequal battle, and the cat seems to enjoy it. Such things are, no doubt, necessary. But, if they must go on, they should at least go on out of sight. We may not mind conniving at the murder of a mouse, but we object to being made spectators of it and, as it were, participators. Man, after all, is a sportsman. Or a hypocrite. Or both.

As for wasps, that is another matter. Who minds killing a wasp? The only people I ever knew who minded killing a wasp were people who were frightened that the wasp would sting them before they had killed it, or that its friends would come and sting them after they had killed it. At least, those were the only people of the kind I had known till I went down into the country for the week-end. There I found a lady and two children behaving almost, though not quite, as tenderly towards wasps as towards mice. If a wasp all but drowned himself in the marmalade at breakfast, they would exclaim, "The little darling!" and one of them would carefully take him out on the point of a fruit-knife and carry him over to the windowsill to dry his wings in the sun, poor thing! Heaven knows I have no special antipathy to wasps. I am not afraid of them. I move backwards at their approach merely as a precaution against accidents. Even so, I see no

sense in encouraging them to such a point that one cannot eat a meal without a veritable Pleiades of wasps dancing round one's head with a noise like the noise of an orchestra of muted violins playing distressingly out of tune. It is not that I duck more nervously than other people. In fact, I often hope that other people do not notice that I am ducking at all. But it cannot be good to eat one's meals in an atmosphere in which, all the time, one wishes to duck. It is also rather disturbing to the flow of the gastric juices to be constantly wondering, while chewing one's food, whether one is looking nervous and what the children are thinking. "There's one on your collar," one of the children cries delightedly. "Don't move." Not for a ten-pound note would I so much as breathe, as she gently encourages it to fly with a spoon. "Sweet little thing!" she comments, as it sails off into the air to join its fellow-fiddlers. Drawing a breath of relief at being rid of it, I say "They seem quite tame." "Wasps," says the little girl, airily, "would never hurt anybody, if people didn't hurt them." I should like to be able to believe it, but I have heard the same thing about dogs and about human beings.

There was, I afterwards found, a wasps' nest in one of the apple-trees in the orchard. It was in a hole in a rotten branch, and, when I went out to see it, I observed the wasps from it burying their bodies down to the waist in the not too numerous apples of the man who had lent the cottage. Here, too, it seemed to me, was a situation in which one's duty to the man who owned the house was at least as important as one's duty to the lower animals. The only valid excuse for leaving the nest was that no one knew how to destroy it. I did—at least, I had heard that it could be done

with paraffin oil—but, as I was afraid I might be asked to do it myself and that some of the wasps might come out in a mood of annoyance while I was pouring the oil on their nest, I said nothing about it. Even if I had, however, I doubt if I should have been allowed to interfere with them. The wasps were “little angels,” “little darlings,” and so forth, and must not be touched. And I must say, the wasps appeared grateful, and, though they always seemed to be going to sting one, they never actually did so. Indeed, I was becoming quite accustomed to them at meals, when some people came to tea, and a lady, who took the conventional view of wasps, kept striking them away from her face with her hand as she talked. “Do you mind them?” our hostess asked her innocently. “The sting of a wasp,” said the lady, as if taken aback by such a question, “is exceedingly painful.” And she struck at another of them. The worst of it was, she always waved her hand in such a way as to strike the wasps over towards me. “Here,” thought I to myself, feeling miserable, “she is infuriating Olive’s tame wasps, practically pointing me out to them.” And, as they buzzed round my head, I could hear that their note had altered and had gone a semitone higher.

Since I returned from the week-end, I have been seriously considering two questions in my mind. One is, whether it is possible to be kind to mice without being cruel to your host. The other is whether it is possible to be kind to wasps without being cruel to your guests. There is something to be said for the old-fashioned attitude to ~~certain of the wild~~ creatures.

ROBERT LYND

1879—

Robert Lynd, journalist and essayist, was born and educated at Belfast, Ireland. This contemporary writer is a fresh illustration of the fact that in English literature the history of the Essay is bound up with the development of periodical magazines and newspapers. As Literary Editor of the "Daily News" and a regular contributor to other periodicals Lynd has displayed characteristics that make him an agreeable and popular essayist. His essays have come to be regarded as friendly talks addressed to a miscellaneous body of readers. His subjects are often trivial, yet he succeeds in investing them with significance, and in delicately pointing a moral. His Irish sympathies colour such of his works as "Irish and English," "Home Life in Ireland," "Rambles in Ireland" and "Ireland a Nation." Writing from week to week the periodical essayist inevitably reveals his own personality, in Lynd's case we see a man of genial temper, of ready and often whimsical humour, tolerant and sympathetic towards his fellow-men.

The present essay comes from "The Peal of Bells," a volume that includes essays on hotels, horses, puzzles, worry, laziness, solitude, and similar topics that lend themselves to treatment of an intimate and conversational tone. Similar volumes are "The Pleasures of Ignorance," "The Money Box," "The Blue Lion," and "The Orange Tree." The student who aims at the cultivation of an easy and graceful style of writing will find these works helpful.

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